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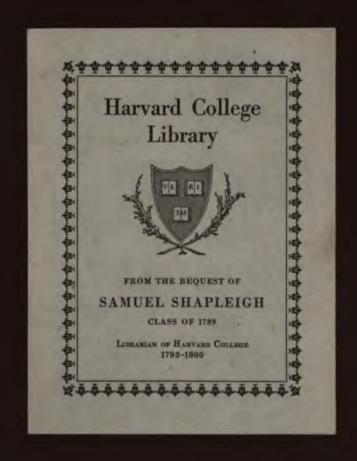
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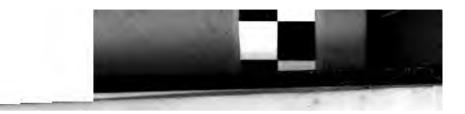
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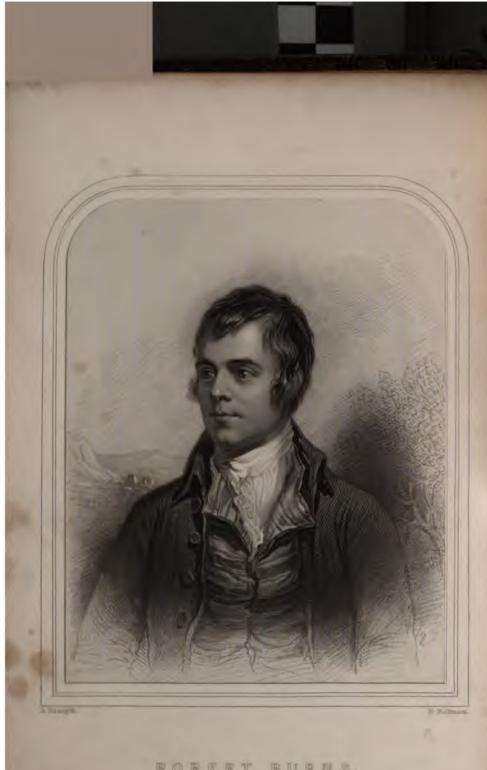
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To Mif Agnet Finlar with Unde John's best regards

1859





ROBERT BURNS.

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BURNS CENTENARY POEMS

A COLLECTION OF

FIFTY OF THE BEST

OUT OF MANY HUNDREDS WRITTEN ON OCCASION OF

The Centenary Celebration,

INCLUDING THE SIX RECOMMENDED FOR PUBLICATION BY THE JUDGES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION,
MANY OF THE HIGHLY COMMENDED, AND SEVERAL PRIZE PORMS.

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

GEORGE ANDERSON AND JOHN FINLAY.

GLASGOW: THOMAS MURRAY AND SON.

EDINBURGH: JOHN MENZIES.

LONDON: ARTHUR HALL, VIRTUE AND CO.

DUBLIN: M'GLASHAN AND GILL.

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Shapleighofeund

Richard Monchton Milnes,

Com Taylor,

and

Theodore Martin,

the Judges appointed by the Directors of the Crystal Palace Co.

to decide on the merits of the

Six Pundred and Ewenty-one Poems written in honour of Robert Burns
on occasion of the Centenary Celebration,

this Work is respectfully dedicated in sincere admiration of the high

literary attainments which enabled them to fulfil

their difficult task.



Preface.

It seems not altogether out of place to pause for a brief moment on the threshold of our work, to glance at the history of the celebration of which the contents of the following pages are the chief and golden fruit; to measure, if possible, the height and the depth of that sentiment, which, kindled by one master-mind, thus burns out bright and strong, even after the snows of seventy winters have fallen cold upon his grave; and which even at this distant day so sympathetically stirs the Saxon heart, not only in the quiet seats of learning and peaceful arts at home, but alike where it beats and boils in its struggle with rude nature and ruder man, as it leads the triumphal march of civilisation onward round the globe. Whether among the populous cities of the old world, or amid the turmoil of Eastern war, or in those newer worlds where our race is building up new empires and consecrating new homes-wherever two or three British hearts have gathered together-they have rejoiced to renew the bond of old sympathies by celebrating the hundredth birth-day of ROBERT BURNS.

If any doubts existed before as to the standing of Burns as a man and as a poet, they have been dispelled by the universality and fervour of the recent celebration. The world never saw the like before—its old ovations to kings and conquerors pale away before a triumph like this. War has ever had its pomps and its glories, but Peace has its triumphs too, and this surely is one

of its worthiest; for in honouring the Peasant Poet of Scotland, we honour the manliest and truest man Scotland ever saw.

In this attribute of entire manliness lies the master-spell of Burns' influence. It was not only because he had genius and intellectual power, "the vision and the faculty divine," but because, in addition to these in an eminent degree, he had so many points of sympathy that appeal to and sway our hearts. With the manly energy he had also the man's weakness—with the passions, the frailties—with the joys, the sufferings—the doubts and the fears, the aspirations and the hopes.

Heaven-raptured spirits, like Milton or Dante, that are gifted to utter the glories of heaven and to grapple the horrors of hell, have, no doubt, a loftier inspiration than descended on Burns; but glorious as such mission is, we may well doubt if the magic power to win and rule men's passions and affections, as Burns does, be not the more beneficial influence even in the highest interests of humanity.

Burns was essentially and entirely one of the people, born among them and living his whole life with them; yet the lowly circumstances in which he was placed exercised no prejudicial influence over his genius, but, on the contrary, were well adapted to produce the full development of mental power of a high order, and no doubt largely aided in enabling him to accomplish the great mission of his life. Nurtured in a pious Presbyterian home, he had before him the example of a high morality, while the somewhat stern principles of the father came softened to him by the more tender grace and gentler influence of the mother. His education was decidedly superior to his class; his labours in the open field gave a healthy stimulus to the poetic temperament, and ample scope for the

study of Nature in her simplest and grandest phases; among his lowly companions he imbibed the thoughts, customs, language, and legendary lore of his country, all which, acting on a strong mind, deep feelings, and a moral sense of naturally high tone, inspired him with a lofty patriotism, an ardent devotion in the cause of suffering humanity, and an uncompromising hatred of oppression and wrong.

Richly endowed with the gift of song, he became through that the bosom friend and teacher of the people, and did much to purify and refine the literature of his age. Prior to his day the ballads recited and sung in cottage and hall were of the most objectionable kind, but the coarse old words soon died out before the purer sentiments to which he for ever wedded the plaintive music of his native land. Beneath his inspiration the rude Doric assumed new forms of beauty, and with a purer morality, acquired all the tenderness and grace of a classic tongue.

But if Burns had been no more than a reformer of his own age, his fame and his works would have lived only in the history of his time, whereas the spirit of his teachings is a living influence still. His songs are a perennial fountain of high principle and manly worth; still do our people, for their own consolation, imbibe there, independence, self-reliance, and hope; for the common weal, honesty, patriotism, and love—that large-hearted love that embraces all things noble, good, or suffering.

Hence it is that in all men's hearts he holds so lofty a place, and that the time was ripe for an occasion to do him honour. It matters not who first mooted the idea of a centenary festival; probably our American cousins were the first; but if the feeling in which it originated had not been universal, the idea would have fallen still-born; instead of that, it met an instant and eager

viii PREFACE.

response, not only over the length and breadth of our own land, but in America, India, and the Colonies; wherever the English tongue is spoken, preparations were made for the celebration. In Scotland, of course, this feeling was pre-eminent; the smallest villages had their commemorative gatherings, while the cities and towns held high festival. At these meetings the foremost men of the day were the speakers, and they have put on record such an aggregate of loving eloquent thoughts about Burns, such lofty appreciation of his merits, that envy and detraction are humbled and silenced for ever.

Very conspicuous among the celebrations was that at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham; beneath its lofty domes fourteen thousand people assembled; letters and relics of the Bard were exhibited, and selections from his works read; but the chief attraction of the fête was the reading of the Prize Poem, and the announcement of the author's name.

The directors had offered a prize of fifty guineas for the best poem in honour of Burns; the conditions were that it should be in English, in any measure, and of from one hundred to two hundred lines in length. The extraordinary number of six hundred and twenty-one poems had been sent in, and it was rumoured that the first writers of the day were among them. Three gentlemen of high literary rank had been selected as Judges, and, after weeks of labour, they had unanimously awarded first place to a beautiful ode by Miss Isa Craig; at the same time, however, they stated that "many of the unsuccessful poems were of remarkable merit," and they recommended the best six for publication, one of which (that by Mr Myers) they considered so nearly equal to the first, that they had difficulty in deciding between them. They further

particularised other twenty-six as worthy of special commendation, "evincing much power of thought and poetic culture."

The Prize Poem was of course published, but the consent of the other six authors could not be got, and, notwithstanding that the public expressed much interest in them, it appeared highly probable, and at the same time very much to be regretted, that works stamped with such high praise might remain lost to the world. It occurred to the Editors of this Volume that some effort ought to be made to collect these poems, and to publish them along with others that had been written elsewhere on the occasion. They thought that such a collection, if attainable, would form, of all tributes, by far the highest and fittest that could be paid to the memory of the Bard; and that, whether successful as a publication or not, it should be handed down as a loving legacy of song from this centenary to the next, to tell the men of all the intervening time, what the age succeeding his own, thought and felt about Burns, as these thoughts and feelings should be reflected from the minds of so many of its best average writers.

The difficulties in the way, however, appeared considerable. The names of the authors were not known—no adequate remuneration could well be offered for so many poems, and it was doubtful if even that would bring them out; at the same time, copyrights could not be asked for, gratis, to publish for private profit; that course would have been repugnant to the spirit in which the Editors desired to enter upon a labour of love, and would certainly have failed. The only course that gave hope of success, was to enlist the authors' sympathies in the scheme, by undertaking a disinterested risk, and by devoting all profits to some public or charitable object in connection with Burns,

PREFACE.

giving, at the same time, to each accepted contributor, a vote in that disposal.

This plan has succeeded beyond the most sanguine anticipations of the Editors; without other fee or reward than the pleasure of aiding in so good a cause, to their high credit be it stated, nearly four hundred authors have sent in their poems, freely, heartily, and with their best wishes for the success of the scheme. Among these are all the six above mentioned, and a large number of the twenty-six, as well as prize poems from Belfast, and many other productions of great merit. The Editors have been embarrassed by their wealth: to publish all was impossible, and the difficulty of selection has been so great, that though they have accepted more than double the number that some of their friends recommended as the maximum, many have been left out with regret.

It will be readily understood that in a whole book of poems, all on one subject, the greatest danger to be avoided was a sameness of treatment, which, even with great excellence, might have been tedious; and therefore originality and variety of style had to be considered fully as much as other qualities. It seems necessary to make this explanation, because a considerable number that have not been accepted, possess merits in many respects equal to some of the more fortunate.

The Editors have made their selection with a sole and earnest endeavour to make the book, in every respect, worthy of the object in view. It might have been more complete had it contained the Prize Poem, and in this belief they exhausted every reasonable proposal to secure it; but Messrs Bradbury & Evans, the proprietors of the copyright, very fairly attached high pecuniary value to it, and recognised no other considerations.

True, they had asked for six, but to give one was, of course, another affair. The readers of the present day are, fortunately, already familiar with Miss Craig's poem, and may be expected to look forward with more interest to those they have not seen: unquestionable as are the merits of that ode, it by no means exhausts the subject; no single poem well could do that, but what one mind could hardly do, may have been approximated by united effort; the entire collection, therefore, should be regarded as one grand poem, composed indeed of many parts, the offspring of many minds, each with a poetic power and an individuality of its own, yet collectively forming a rich and harmonious whole, unfolding in vivid and varied pictures the many-sided beauties of Burns, and lovingly broadening the foundations of his fame.

The assertion has been frequently made, of late days, that this is a practical and unpoetic age; the Editors with confidence present this collection as irrefragable proof of the fallacy of such an idea; they venture to assert, without fear of contradiction, that no previous period of the world's history could have produced, on any one subject, a collection of poems so extensive and of such high quality. It may, indeed, be admitted that all the passions, feelings, and yearnings, of our common humanity have been so sweetly and so powerfully sung already, that there is little room for novelty, and our poetic bees prefer feeding on old honey to laying up new stores. Be that as it may, only let a fitting theme arise, and the poets of the present day, with their enlarged ideas and rich culture, will not be wanting in lofty thought, nor in high and worthy utterance, and certainly, on this one subject, the great names of the past have even now been eclipsed.

In Scottish song the case is different indeed; the Editors have

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PREFACE.

to express their surprise, that the language in which Burns wrote, seems now to have no master-hand left to strike its chords, even in his honour. The poems submitted to them in the Scottish tongue have been, as a class, the poorest of any, and not one possessed such merit as to give it a claim to place. As Scotchmen they may express their unavailing regrets at this decadence in the national minstrelsy, but the fact seems beyond dispute, that the genius and literature of Scotland now speak in a foreign tongue; that what Lord Brougham calls "the pure classical language of Scotland" may, like the other classical languages, repose on its old glories, but has ceased to gather any that are new.

In conclusion, the Editors desire to convey their most grateful acknowledgments and thanks for the cordial spirit in which their efforts have been met, not only by the authors who have contributed their poems, but by various literary friends and well-wishers; they beg to particularise Messrs Finlay & Son of the Northern Whig, who themselves gave prizes for a Belfast competition, and have contributed free choice of all their poems, of which six have been accepted; also to the Editor of the Scotsman for Mrs Norton's poem, and others; to the Editors of the Atlas, the Critic, the Dublin University Magazine, the Amateur's Magazine, the Glasgow Citizen, the Ayr Observer, Ayr Advertiser, etc.

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This first Poem in the book is that which the Crystal Palace Judges considered so nearly equal to the Prize Paren, that they had "remaiderable difficulty in deciding between them."

Next follow five, completing the best Six selected by the Judges for Publication: these five are placed in the order in which they were named by the Judges, thus being distinctly samed not to be in order of merit relatively to each other.

Following these are the first and second Prize Poems at the Belfast Competition, where Professor G. L. CRAIK was Judge.

After these all the Poems in the book are placed indiscriminately, interspersed with many of the twenty-six commended at the Crystal Palace, but these are placed in no order of merit whatever: indeed, the Editors have endeavoured to keep up the quality as evenly as possible through the book, so that all positions after the first eight may be considered equally good.

Accepted Contributors, who have not been recently in communication with the Editors, are requested to send their correct addresses through the Publishers at their earliest convenience.

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Burns Centenary Poems.

L

PREDERIC W. H. MYERS, CHALTENHAM

OHE OF THE SIX RECOMMENDED FOR PUBLICATION BY THE JUDGES AT THE CRISTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

I.

HE passed, our wonder, our regret;

Two generations since have yielded breath,

But bright remembrance glows among us yet,

And glory broadens from the plunge of death.

So sure a fame the sacred poet waits,

That though unreverenced he cross the gates

Which bar the realms of action and of doom;

He murmurs not, content to see

His praise beyond obscurity,

His glory out of gloom;

Nor fitly charges equal fate, but knows

That through conjectured ages far to be,

Meet honour fails not from his tomb, but grows

To plenitude with just posterity.

1

So is it with that memory we set

More fair than any fame to Scotsmen yet;



CENTENARY POEMS.

2

For neither passed he in mid storm of praise,
As Romulus in thunder, from the throng,
Nor led in honoured ease melodious days,
And from his fulness shook the land with song:
But through stern toil of unrejoicing youth
He reared a spirit open-eyed to truth,
Nor baser ever through calamity,
But keen from deepening care to see
The broad world glad in good, and misery
Prelude and germ of fair eternity.

III.

No station his of wealth or honoured birth,
No fame ancestral whence to stir the earth,
Nought save his manhood and high worth;
So truth arose in peasant mind
Wherewith all freedom rings,
Of force to scatter to the wind
False pride, which station brings;
"Man's exaltation is not that he rules,
Nor can accrue just honour unto fools;
The good is noblest of his kind,
The poet more than kings."

IV.

Therefore his people glories in his birth,

And under many a morn his name is great,

And we from many a realm of earth

His honour celebrate

Who forced not song for petry praise.

Nor in feigned passion rawel for sympathy
But lightened into escreen lays.

In truth and rate simplicity:

And knowing man to man is kin.

Song hand to brothers for and near.

And stood in strength that rate within.

Unwarped by praise, unchecked by fear.

O silent shapes athwart the darkening sky! Magnificence of many-folded kills, Where the dead mist hangs and the lone hawks cry. Seamed with the white fall of a thousand rills; O lucid lakes! serene from shore to shore, With promontories set of solemn pines, Broad mirrors which the pale stars tremble o'er. Deep-drawn among the misty mountain lines; O holy hearths, internerate of crime: O tale of martyrs by the flickering sod! O righteous race, in stedfast toil sublime: O noblest poem, "Let us worship God!" Ye taught him, shaping truthful days; Of you he told to men, for he From wayside reeds sweet tone could raise More dear than full accord of symphony, Knowing that whatsoe'er the poet sings, Of protetyped in nature or in man,

Moves deeply, though it touch not wrath of kings Or frantic battle-van.



CENTENARY POEMS.

VI.

But most intent the people hears,

Tranced to silence, thrilled to tears,
When the joys of love and fears
Fall in music on their ears;
Stirring noble sympathies,
Waking hope and high desire,
And, to introspective eyes,
Granting glimpse of Heaven's fire.

VII.

Nor scorns he such delight, whose heart and eye Are tempered to the truth of poesy, Nor following baser natures, would degrade Aught from that honour which the Eternal made; Nor ranks this frame the soul's offence, Nor lovely form the slave of sense; But knowing good is beauty, hath believed Beauty is also good, nor oft deceived; Yea, such a surge of life his pulses fills, And so abounding passion through him thrills, That with fierce cries for sympathy, With longing and with agony, The glory of his thought goes forth to greet All fair, though unregarding, he shall meet, And oft with price the mean endues, The ignoble holds for rare; And wooing bright imagined hues A phantom loveliness pursues, But knows too late an equal otherwhere.

CENTENARY PORMS.

THE

So in deep ambrosial night

Palls a star from heaven's height;

Mad for earth, a sliding spark

Down the deadness of the dark.

Palleth, findeth his desire,

Loseth his celestial fire,

Quenched to iron, like his love.

For her face is fair above;

But within her heart is stone,

Adamant and chalcedon.

IX.

But he for whom three peoples mourn,
On many a breeze of madness borne,
At many a fancied loss forlorn,
Yet soon as stedfast will began,
And life through firmer manhood ran,
To one prime passion nobly true,
In bliss, but most in sorrow, knew
A woman's perfect love, best boon to man.

X.

So lived he, fearing God; his ways

Were dim with penury, uncheered of praise;

Yet not without a noble work begun—

One cry for truth against the might of wrong;

One bolt from thunder-volleys hurled,

On that grim prince who rules the world,



CENTENARY POEMS.

6

The bright defiance of a lightning song;
O not without a noble work begun,
Failed he in sorrow from the sun,
Fared he to tell the deeds that he had done,
Leaving his people, to the latest days,
A heritage of unforgotten lays.

XI.

But nearer aye the hounds of Ruin bayed,
And Error was upon him, that he strayed,
And close at heart remorseful Phrensy preyed,
And pitiless Disaster ran him down;
Till mute Death took him, weary, undismayed,
And calm in hallowed earth his bones were laid;
His the toil, be his the crown!
O great heart by low passions swayed!
O high soul by base cares assayed!
O silence, silence, never to be broken,
Till some dread word from the white throne be spoken!

XII

Ah! yet we trust he findeth end to ill,

Nor in deep peace remembereth misery,

Who in the heart of his loved land is still,

Between the mountains and the clamorous sea.

There all night the deeps are loud,

Billow far to billow roaring,

But he, sleeping in his shroud,

Heareth not the waters pouring.

Yea, though the sun shall wheel a splendrous form
Unseen, above the dim cloud-cataract,
Though lightnings glimmer to the rainy tract,
And all the land be wan with storm,
He knows not, wont of old to see,
In high thought severed from his kind,
Beyond the wrack Divinity,
Jehovah on the wind.

XIII.

O story sadder than dethroned kings—
A poet lost to earth!

Yea, though his land in plenty sings,
Forgetful of her dearth,

And though his people in just laws is great,
And willing fealty to an equal state,
And though her commerce on all ocean thrives,
And every province swarms with happy lives,
Yet weep the great heart hidden in the sod;
All else to man through faithful toil arrives—
The poet straight from God.



The Birth-Day of Burns.

ONE OF THE SIX RECOMMENDED FOR PUBLICATION BY THE JUDGES AT THE ORYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

"Gaudente terră vomere laureato, et triumphali aratore."

BIRTH-DAYS, my brothers!—do not our affections

Mark them with cross or star

Of prophecies, still more than recollections,

In home's sweet calendar?

Then why keep birth-days of the great men sleeping
Under the church-yard grass?—
No prophecies of gladness or of weeping
Across the hush'd ones pass.

Below, there may be shadows raining over,
And sunlights chasing fleet,
And seasonable change of bud and clover
At the cold head and feet.

They are withdrawn from all the stir and clanging To life divinely still:

Rapturous, yet changeless, like a torrent hanging, White, from some purple hill.

Earth plays the stepdame to her poets ever,

—Then grieves and gives them fame;

As if they cared to hear by God's great river

The echoes of their name!

Her martyrologies high Genius fashions
With many a line of red;
Each birth-day in them hath its acts and passions:
O wronged and gifted dead!

Therefore, to-day, 'neath many a festive portal Repentant memory turns Upon this anniversary immortal To Scotland's poet, Burns.

Him, on whom Heav'n bestow'd the heart's fine flashes, The lyrist's delicate art; While man wrought out for symbol o'er his ashes

A broken lyre and heart.

Come with me, O my brothers!—I would bring ye Backward a hundred years, And of the marvellous infant's birth-day sing ye Something with smiles and tears. Smiles for the song that hath such rare beguilement,
Laughter and love to win;
Tears for the dust and ashes of defilement,
Tears for the shame and sin.

Hark! as you cottage clock through night's long watchesKnelleth the minutes by,One standing on the floor expectant catchesA little stranger's cry.

The first faint swinging of the bells of wonder
Hung in life's belfry brave!
Birth-bubbles of the stream whose broadening thunder
Rolls to its bar—the grave.

There is weird music out on river-surges,

A voice on fell and ford;

And where, like cherubim through long dark gorges,

The moonlight flames her sword

Of silver on the waters, stands a spirit,

Holding a golden lyre—

She from whom Scotia's ballad-bards inherit

Their pathos and their fire.

"Of old," she saith, "this land of mine was noted For singers many a one; O'er her wild tales their rainbow-lays they floated, Born of her storm and sun.

- "I only touch'd them with my inspiration,
 Put harps into their hand—
 There was enough of love and indignation,
 And legend in the land!
- "To them the 'gurly ocean' brought a wailing Of girls in 'kames o' goud'—
 - 'Sir Patrick and our true loves are not sailing Home—for the sea's their shroud!'*
- "The summer twilight show'd them Elfland's lady
 Riding by Eildon-tree—
 Sweet chimed her horse's bells through forest shady
 Like the far silver sea.
- "O the moss-trooper's catch of merry slaughter, Red on the diamond-dew, Of jingling spurs by banks of Eden water, Green gleuves and feathers blue!
- "O the sweet wish that softly dieth—dieth,
 Griefless at last to be
 Turf-happ'd and sound asleep, as she that lieth
 On fair Kirkconnell-lee.
- "Far from fight, frolic, wine, desire, or sorrow, Round wild hearts, green grass! twine, To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow In quietness divine!

^{*} Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens.

- "At close of every woe or jubilation,
 O passionate spirit! trace
 The beauty of that peaceful habitation,
 And quiet resting-place.*
- "Why are no new songs chanted, O my singers?

 Sweet Poesy liveth yet—

 Along the grey cliffs glide its sunny fingers;

 The autumnal violet
- "Of sunset wraps it in the gentle weather;
 With spring's wild-rose it stirs;
 It lieth purple-rich along the heather,
 And golden on the furze.
- "The only ornaments it needs are lying,
 Around ye and above,
 In stars, and hills, in human hopes undying,
 In human grief, and love.
- "Dear to my soul, O baby poet, rest thee,
 Hush thee, my darling! hush.
 With the sweet lintwhite's nature I invest thee,
 With music like the thrush.

^{*} I have not thought it necessary to specify all the well-known Scottish Ballads to which I allude; but I would draw attention to that strange hopeless view of life—that yearning after death—that peculiar endearing wealth of expressions about the grave, like a sleepy child's fondling words for its bed—which characterises so many of them.

- "All Scottish legends shall thy fancy fashion,
 All airs that richly flow,
 Laughing with frolic, tremulous with passion,
 Broken with lovelorn woe.
- "Ballads, whose beauty years have long been stealing,
 And left few links of gold,
 Shall to thy quaint and subtle touch of healing
 Seem fairer—not less old.
- "Grey Cluden and the vestal's choral cadence
 Thy might shall wake therewith;
 Till boatmen hang their oars, to hear the maidens
 Upon the moonlit Nith.
- "Thine, too, the strains of battle nobly coming, From Bruce, or Wallace wight, Such as the Highlander shall oft be humming Before some famous fight.
- "Nor only these—for thee the hawthorn hoary Shall in new wreaths be wrought— The 'crimson-tippèd' daisy wear fresh glory, Born of poetic thought.
- "From the 'wee cow'ring beastie' shalt thou borrow
 A wondrous wealth of rhyme,
 A noble tenderness of human sorrow,
 Thou moralist sublime!

- "O but the mountain breezes shall be pleasant
 Upon the sun-burnt brow
 Of that poetic and triumphant peasant,
 Driving his laurell'd plough!"
 - 'Tis done. But hear ye not a voice all broken
 With woe, on Nith and Ayr,
 Burden'd with sadness that can scarce be spoken,
 Dying into a prayer?
- "O the wild wit that mars the holy hymning,
 The stains upon the stole,
 The spray-drops from the sea of passion dimming
 The windows of the soul.
- "Would I might take the peasant's lyre of wonder,
 My hand across it lay,
 And snap the strings, the golden strings, in sunder,
 And fling it far away!
- "This fatal gift of Genius to the peasant
 Spare—let him work his work—
 So shall his rest at sunset be more pleasant
 Under the grave-yard birk!"
 - Once more comes answer, O my brothers!—"Yonder, Safe from the reach of sin, Where wayward Genius never more may wander, The kings of earth come in.

- "Not only monarchs—God-encrown'd creators,
 The deep of heart and strong;
 The poets, and the thinkers, royal natures,
 The kings of thought, and song.
- "They who write lines where-through gleam Heaven and duty,
 As through a forest tree
 Is interwoven here and there the beauty
 Of a blue summer-sea.
- "Ofttimes when earth last saw them, they were bleeding, Thorn-crown'd, and sore perplex'd; They shall be changed, and beautiful exceeding When she shall see them next.
- "Changed—for ere death some miracle of healing Touch'd the heart's wither'd leaf; And beautiful—with that divine annealing Which purifies through grief.
- "A grief which brings them to some great affliction Laid on God's altar-shrine; Some drops of blood that fall in benediction, Some touch of tears divine.
- "There where the loftiest songs are the most vestal,
 Where truest, is most fair,
 Where Poesy upon the sea of crystal
 Yearneth, but grieveth ne'er.

16

"The poet finds the best of his creations
Well known, and gone before,
Familiar to the emancipated nations
Upon the golden floor."

Hark! round the clay-built cot and cradle lowly
By banks of bonnie Doon,
Λ voice of diverse songs—some wild, some holy—
Λ many-mingling tune.

that all at last with solemn sweet surprises
Like anthems die away—
And o'er the glee of "Tam o' Shanter" rises,
The "Cottor's Saturday."

And from a multitude beside the river,
And on the mountain sod,
Nwells, and rings up, and up, as if for ever,
"Come, let us worship God!"*

-SECONO

^{*} The lines in the "Cotter's Saturday" will not be forgotten, nor Robert Burns' conversation with his brother.

A Centennry Song.

BY GERALD MASSEY.

ONE OF THE SIX BECOMMENDED FOR PUBLICATION BY THE JUDGES AT THE OBYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

A VAGRANT Wild Flow'r, sown of God, out in the waste was born; It sprang up as a Corn-flow'r in the golden fields of Corn:

The Corn all strong and stately in its bearded bravery grew,—

Gathered the gold for harvest-time—grew ripe in sun and dew;

And when it bowed the head—as Wind and Shadow ran their

Like influences from Heaven come to Earth for playing place—
It seem'd to look down on the Flower as in a smiling scorn,
Poor thing, you grow no food, no grain for garner! said the Corn.
The lonely Flow'r still bloomed its best, contented with its place,
God's blessing fell upon it as it lookt up in his face!

And there they grew together till the white-winged Reapers
came—

The Sickles shining in their hands, their faces were aflame!

The Corn they reapt for earthly use, but an Angel fell in love With that wild Flow'r, and wore it at the Harvest-home above.

A hundred years ago this morn he came our human way,

And we would change the crown of thorn for healing leaves

to-day;

Alas: that we can only wreathe the cold white Marble's brow; Though loud we speak or low we breathe, we cannot reach him now:

He loved us all: he loved so much: his love the world could hold, And now the whole wide world with such a love would round him fold.

Tis long and late before it wakes so, yet a true world still, It hath a heart so large, it takes a century to fill!

Ay, tell the wondrous tale, while songs are sung and warm words said!

Tell how he wore the hodden grey, and won sweat-sweetened bread:

A wintry welcome at the door did greet him to his lot,
Our royal Minstrel of the Poor hid in an old Clay Cot.
And rough, and wild, and wintry was the welcome that he got.
There, in the bonny Bairn-time, knelt he at his Mother's knee,
With such a face as might have drawn down saintly souls to see
The rosy Innocent at prayer, just ready to the hand
Of Blumber's guardian Angel for the blessed Silent land!
There young Love came and brought rare balms that will
howitch the blood,

And make it dance, while spirits sing, with life in hey-day flood!

And there she found her favourite Child, the Muse of sunbrowned health.

Who nurst him up into the wild young Heir of all her wealth; Ay, there she rockt his infant thought with visions glorious, That hallow now the Poor Man's Cot for evermore to us. Angelic playmates in disguise were those still dreams of youth That drew it to great things, and there we find they live in truth.

Burns knew the sorrows of poor folks, he felt their patient pain, And from his clouded soul he shook a music soft as rain; At the presence of Oppression in his face the white fire seethed, But at the gentlest touch the lion lineaments were sheathed. His eyes, dilated large with heart, and flashing as the levin. Grew sweet and clear, and calm and grand, as are the eyes of Heaven.

On hands and knees, in Life's low ways, the Poor must often creep Where Manhood may not walk full height; and this made Robin weep.

Heaven-mirroring deep tenderness that big brave being fills,
Beautiful as the meek blue lake among the rugged hills;
And quick as Mother's milk at thrill of her Babe's touch, and strong,

It floods his heart, and fills his eyes, and overflows his song. But none dare sneer that sees the tear in Burns's honest eye, It tells you clearly that it comes from where the thunders lie! Such passionate ardours quiver in the precious pearl of pain. As lurks the spirit of lightning in the drop of tempest rain.

Of all the Birds the Robin is the darling of the Poor, His nest is sacred, he goes free by window or by door; His lot is very lowly, and his coat is homely brown,
But in the rainy day he sings when gayer friends have flown;
And hoarded up for us he brings, in his breast of bonny red,
A gathered glory of the Springs and Summers long, long fled!
And so of all the Birds of Song to which the poor man turns,
The darling of his listening love is gentle Robin Burns.
His summer soul our winter warms, makes glory in our gloom,
His nest is safe for ever in the poor man's home.
Yes, there was such a glow of life and love in Robin's breast,
Its warmth can melt the winter snow in Poverty's cold nest.

Auld Scotland's Music long had wailed, and wailed about the land, So yearning in her sweetness and so sorrowfully grand; And many grieved to tears, yet could not tell what she would say,

But Robin wed her with his words, and they were one for aye.

Ah, how some old sweet cradle-song the wandering heart still brings

Home, Home again, so strongly drawn in Love's own leadingstrings!

His Ministrants of Music run where night is all so mirk,
You scarce can see the Devil in the Darkness at his work,
Or tell the face of friend from foe, but these Song-Spirits come
And bring some little light of heaven into the meanest home:

Weave flowers of radiant relief in life's grey common woof,
And make the vine of Patience twine about the barest roof.
They set them singing at their work, or where no voice is found,
Out smiles the soft mind-music that is all too fine for sound.
The inner glow enriches life with tints of pictured bloom,
Like firelight warm upon the walls against the outer gloom.

On either side the hearth they giale into the seat of Care. Immortal Presences that bide in blessed beauty there.

More welcome than cool sods of earth, out ere the Sun he risen. To the caged Lark, are Robin's sames in smooth City reison. The Sailor warms his heart with them out on the wintry sea: The Serf stands up ennobled in the knighthood of the Free The Soldier sad on Midnight watch, or weary march by day Grows cheery at their tidings from the old land for away We hug the Homestead closer and the fresh lowe-tendings rather To make our clasp more food for fear our dear ones we may the When Hesper with his sparkling eye sees lovers face to face. Where droopt lids shade a burning beauty with their sityer pro-And holy is the hour and all so silent comes the night. Lest even the breath of facry stir that poise so feather-light In which two hearts are weighed for life and like a humming him-The inner world of happiness with masic grows alive There as Life aches so heart in heart and hand in hand yearns,

Love shakes his wings, and sours and sings some song of Bakin Burns.

Think how that poor worn Lucknow band listened across the strife.

And held the breath which seem'd their last they had to draw in life,

To hear the music asking in the battle pauses brief.

As Havelock and his mighty men swept in to their relief.

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot? through flaming hell we come

To keep the pledge so often given around the hearth at home!

We'll take a cup of kindness yet for Auld Lang Syne,

Ay, tho' that cup be filled with dear heart's blood instead of
wine!

And here's a hand, my trusty friend:" and lo! the dear old Land

From out that smoke of carnage reacht and claspt them with her hand.

How dearly Robin lo'ed the land that gave such heroes birth,
Its wee blue bit of Heaven, and its dear green nook of Earth;
And sweeter is the honey breath of heather on the wold,
And dearer is the bonny broom with its bloom of beamless gold;
The Daisy opes its eye, and quick from Nature's heart so true,
The tear of Burns peeps sparkling! an immortal drop of dew!
Down by the singing burn we greet his voice of liberty,
High on the mountain side we meet his spirit blythe and free!
With eyes a thought more tender, do we look on all dumb things;
In his large love they stand, as he had sheltered them with wings!

Clear as this Magic Crystal in its shining Mirror shows

The dappling shadows of the clouds and Dawnlight's ruddy rose,
The smiling sapphire of the noon, the sundown's golden close,
And Midnight's burning bush of beauty, where God's glory
glows—

Did Burns reflect the changeful looks that pass o'er Nature's face. The grandeur and the homeliness, her glory and her grace: Unto his sun-like gaze along our wayside wanderings, Shy Beauty lifts her veil of haze, and smiles in common things. And Robin did not bend in soul, till blind, in search of pelf—He did not walk worm-eaten with eternal thoughts of self;

In natural kingliness he stood before the lords of earth, And set the majesty of Man above the badge of Birth.

A hundred years ago to-day the glorious stranger came,
And men lookt up in wonder at the wild and wandering flame.
The fiercer fire of life confined, with higher heave it breaks,
And higher will the mountain mind up-thrust its star-ward peaks;
Then often is the kindling clay with its red lightnings riven,
And Earth holds up a radiant wreck to pray for healing Heaven.
Around his soul more sternly warred the powers of Wrong and
Right;

And thunder-scathed and battle-scarred Death bore him from the fight:

But now we know that he was one of high and shining race,
All gone the mortal mists that dimmed the fair immortal face;
The splendour of a thousand suns breaks out; the tearful rain
No more with passionate pathos runs, and there is no more
pain:

All gone the sorrow and sadness! soil and stain away have passed, High in the heaven of fame he sits quietly crowned at last! The prowling Ghoul hath left his grave, and praying Pharisee; His frailties fade, his virtues live, and work immortally.

Weep tears of exultation that the Peasant's princely son,
Born in an old Clay-Biggin', such a peerless throne hath won,
And such a crown, so fair, so brave, thy Child hath wrought
for thee,

Thou grey old nurse of Heroes! thou proud Mother Poverty!

Look up! and let the solemn tears be toucht with sparks of pride!

Look up! in his great glory we are also glorified!

Or weep the tears of sorrow that his brightness e'er should dim;

Then 'tis the tear of sorrow brings us nearer unto him:
'Tis here we touch his garment hem, 'tis here the lowliest earns
The right to call him Brother, one of us, our Robin Burns.
In suffering's fire we always forge our dearest bond of love.
Ah, Robin! if God hear our prayer, 'tis all made well above!
And you, who comforted His poor in this world, have your home
With those He comforteth, His Poor, in all the world to come.

Dear Robin! could you come again, how changed it all would be; The heart of this wide world doth yearn to take you welcomingly! Warm eyes would shine at windows, hands would greet you at the door,

Where oft they let you pass heart-sick, so heedlessly of yore!

And they would have you wear the Crown who bade you bear
the Cross

They knew not of their glorious gain without the bitter loss!

The Cup you carried was so filled, the crowd so pressed

Dragged down your lifted arm, and spilled such dear drops on the ground!

How we would comfort your distress, and wipe your tears away,

By silent pressure of a hand, tell all the heart could say,

But strive to speak the words that make the measure of great grief—

In tears that suck the sting of soul—run over with relief: Your poor heart heaving like a sea that moaneth evermore, And tries to creep into the caves of Rest, but finds no shorePoor heart! come rest thee, would we plead, come rest thee in the calm;

And we would bathe its weary life with Love's immortal balm:

The tremulous sweetness round your mouth should smile as once it smiled,

You great strong man, with woman soul, and heart of a little Child.

We cannot see your face, Robin! nor your free, fearless brow!

We cannot hear your voice, Robin! but you are with us now!

Altho' your mortal face is veiled behind the spirit-wings:

You draw us up as Heaven the Lark when its music in him sings:

You fill our souls with tender awe, you make our faces shine, You brim our cup with kindness here for sake of Auld Lang Syne.

We are all one at heart To-day because you join our hands, While one electric feeling runs thro' all the English lands. But near or far where Britons are the leal and true heart turns More fond to the dear Fatherland for love of Robin Burns.

-ABKBKBY



IV.

BY MRS HENRY W. PHILLIPS.

ONE OF THE SIX RECOMMENDED FOR PUBLICATION BY THE JUDGES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

To-day—a hundred years ago—
When the hills lay deep in snow,
When the north wind, sharp and keen,
Pierced the jagged fir-wood screen,
Shook the mountain's feathery crown,
Hurled the shepherd's shieling down,
Swept across the uplands bare,
Down the "bonnie banks of Ayr"—
In the dreary winter morn,
Then—a peasant's child was born.

And his mother lay and smiled, Nestled by her first-born child, Whispering tearful joy and praise, In that old familiar phrase, Many a mother's heart has thrilled, Many a mother's eye has filled

ENTERALS POEMS

With each simple scheme word—
A man was given her from the lace.
While the little infant by
Headless of the wintry day.
With unconscious, wiseful eyes
Socking for their parent skies.

Been the common life to lead.

Ridge to plough and sheep to feed!

Labour—to the set of sun:

Born for long, unceasing toil.

Fated servant of the soil!

To live, a patient, quiet slave.

To die and fill a nameless grave!

Did no spirit from the glen
Rise to give denial then?
Did no Dryad from the wood,
Did no Kelpie from the flood,
Did no Fay of rock or flower
Hail her monarch's natal hour?
Did old Scotia's Genius keep
Aye her calm majestic sleep,
Hailing by no mystic sign
The minstrel of her royal line?
The bard whose untaught Muse would wake
Beauty from the lonely brake,
Grandeur from the barren hill,
Music from the sparkling rill,

Legend from the ruined hold, Battle-cry from valley old; Fling round Scotland's ancient story A new halo of its glory; Ring his careless music forth From his cottage in the North, Echoing every household tone, Making lowly griefs his own, Waking joyous voice of mirth, Singing songs of home and hearth, Singing God's great gifts of truth, Reverend age and noble youth, Till the deep heart of the land Started to his loving hand,— Till far and wide, from sea to sea, Mankind would own his minstrelsy, And babes unborn, with eager tongue, Tell how the "Ayrshire Ploughman" sung?

For the infant grew a man,
And the battle-day began.

Needs not now to tell the tale,
Needs no requiem's useless wail;
Idle tears and late remorse:
Let them spend their bootless force
By the corpse or o'er the grave—
All too late to soothe or save.

Weak and slight the young renown— Thorns were in the laurel crown,

CENTENARY POEMS.

Canker in the myrtle flower,
Evil in the revel hour;
Checked and thwarted in its spring
Rose the eaglet's daring wing;
Vague and errant was the flight,
Swift and sudden fell the night;
Few the reverent tears that rose
O'er the young life's mournful close,
And scarce the loud world's wrestling throng
Missed the woodlark's silenced song.

And to-day! Oh, wayward Fame,
Through all ages still the same!
Oh, solemn satire said of old!
Oh, bitter truth in proverb told!—
To-day, the Prophet claims his own;
To-day, the King assumes his throne.
To-day, we give him honours due,
To-day, we own his title true,
To-day, we give, what, given in time,
Might well have changed the funeral chime
That makes sad echo to his name,
To a proud nation's joint acclaim.

But ah, too late such fancies now!
Give the meed the Fates allow.
Let Scottish lips his praises sing,
Let Scottish hearts their tribute bring,
And Scottish hands awake the chords
That quicken to his ringing words;

And while the joyous measures rise High echoing to these mimic skies,-While to the name and fame of Burns The tide of proud remembrance turns,-While Scotland's loving loyalty No blot upon his shield will see, But gives her Bard her fondest praise, And weaves her Bard her greenest bays, And, blushing, for the blindness past, Gives him his own proud rank at last,-Let our great age make grave resolve That no more hundred years revolve To find, when their long course is run, One mighty mission left undone. Let no great genius sink and die For lack of love or charity; No Chatterton or Burns arise To mock the times we deem so wise; Give aid to each young heart's desire, Nor chill nor check the generous fire; Let Truth have space to claim her own, And lead each Poet to his throne.

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Elegiacs.

BY ARTHUR J. MUNBY. M.A., TRIN. COLL. CAMBRIDGE

ONE OF THE SIX RECOMMENDED FOR PUBLICATION BY THE JUDGES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

ONCE in a hundred years, when the ebb of creation has fallen

Quite from our arid sands into its ocean afar,

When every loathsome thing, long hid by the merciful waters,

Warm in the stagnant pools, flounders and wallows at ease;

Sudden the tide sets in, and the irresistible billows

Roll at a single bound up to the headlands again.

Once in a hundred years, when the seed of the bigot and worldling

Crawl o'er our fragrant earth, taking its beauties in vain,

Seeing the worst is come, the God and Father of all men

Out of his heaven of love—lest we forget him and die—

Sends us a soul of his own, whom all men claim for a brother,

Saying, "This is a Man, this is a Poet indeed:"

So, on a day like this, when the roar of our century slumber'd

Still in its vaulted abyss, mute as the dulness above,

When on their baseless thrones, forgetting the Lord who had made them. Kings of the earth sat as gods, binding the people at will.

He whom we love was born—was born to the life of a poor man,
Cursed with the anguish of song, blest with its beauty alone.

Not in some grand old gorge in the heart of the musical Highlands,
Fill'd with the torrent's spray, wild with the wailing of winds,—

Not by the western isles, where the galloping surge of the ocean,
Rich with a thousand wrecks, lashes the land of the Gael;

But on the banks of Doon, where the voiceless waters of Ayrshire

Moved through a silent vale, trod by no singers of old;

There was he born: and he came like a knight to the bride of his bosom,
Blessing with exquisite words her who had tarried for him.

Oh for a heart of fire, for a voice of the marvellous Hebrews, Moulding their ancient tongue into the grace of a psalm; Singing of Abraham old and Sarah the mother of nations Dwelling in tented peace, walking with God in the way! So would we sing of that home in the pastoral valleys of Scotland, Where from a cradle of reeds he, the immortal, arose; So would we sing too of him, the earnest labouring father, Who by the Bridge of Doon built him a cottage of clay; Priest in his house and king, who pray'd to the God of his fathers, Breathing instinctive love e'en through a puritan creed; Who in the barren fields, with Poverty stalking behind him, Turn'd on the foe like a man, wrestled and suffer'd and fell-Yet by his ingle at night, with his wife and children about him, Order'd his household well, teaching them lessons of hope; Teaching them lessons of joy, for his soul was steadfast within him, Strong in its antique faith, calm with impregnable peace.

Such was the home of Burns; so simple and tenderly serious Came the sweet Spirit of Song over the life of her child:

CENTENARY POEMS.

Silently came she at first, with the breath of her healthiest breezes

Bracing his boyish limbs, making him apt to enjoy:

Then would she lead him forth, and over the hills, as he wander'd,

Show'd him her glorious noons, show'd him her treasures of eve,

Show'd him at length her haunts, the woods of her pleasant seclusion,

Woods by the waterside, shadow'd and stilly and cool:

There, among innocent birds, and creatures that sport in the green sward.

Taught him the wonder of life, taught him to pity and save:

Taught him to cling to and love with a boundless passionate ardour All that is lovely on earth—Freedom, and Nature, and Man.

Think of him thus for awhile, as he follow'd his plough on the uplands.

Driving the furrow aside only to shelter a worm;

Think of him striding abroad, with his hand in the bag of the sower.

Lavishly shedding the grain over the breast of the glebe,

But with his heart elsewhere—careering aloft with the skylark, Or with the startled hare hurrying into the fern:

Think of him too that day in the harvest-field with the reapers, Binding the corn as it fell under the sweep of the blade;

Not by himself he wrought, for a blooming barefooted maiden Bent at his side, and still mingled her shadow with his:

So at the last he woke, with the thrilling touch of a woman, And from her artless eyes caught the clear lightning of song.

Many a time thenceforth did he learn from the liberal Muses
Rhythmical thoughts most sweet, which in their rustic array

Blush'd with a brighter grace, as the frosted gold of the wine-cup Heightens the polish within, deepens the glow of the wine:

Many a lay did he glean from his hours of want and oppression— Lays that were stolen and sung oft by the fire at eve,

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Lays that he frugally hid, or scatter'd in childish abundance, Ignorant still of his wealth, careless of honour and greed.

But when the days were come, the time of his fated appearing, When to the world he gave all that a poet can bring-Days of immortal woe! Ah why should we set them to music, Since they are writ in our hearts, since we can never forget? Can we forget how he flash'd like a sunbeam into the city, Dazing its quiet hordes, startling its elegant few? How through the gamut of Life he swept with the ease of a singer, Ringing each note to the full, clear as a bugle in war? How, when the crowd rush'd in, and the gay and the wealthy adored him, He in the midst sat firm, lost not an inch of himself; Rising at length unharm'd, like Excalibur out of the waters, Which on its shining blade left but a glitter of dew: How, when he ask'd but to live, and to live for the glory of Scotland, She to his delicate soul gave but the work of a drudge; Lashing her Ariel down, till instead of the elves of the moonlight, Fiends of the moonless dark rose to his presence at will: How, when the man who had pass'd unscathed through the fury of favour, Wrestling with passion and self, slipt in his blindness awhile, They who had trampled his pearls swift turn'd on the giver to rend him; Till, being weary of life, weak with a noble decay, He at the foot of his fame, of the "upright pillar" of Honour, Wrapt in his mantle of pride, fell, like a hero, alone:— Oh, it is written at large in the book of a nation's repentance— All that she gain'd from him, all that he suffer'd through her; And, in the gloom of her grief, the errors and sins of her darling

Seem but as motes in the sun, mists on the ocean of love.

CENTENARY POEMS.

Tell me, then, why do we weep for Burns, the beloved of nations?

Why through a hundred years still do we love him so well?

Why are we gather'd to-day in the aisles of this mighty cathedral,

Not for its floral shrines, not for its wonders of art,

Not for its saints and kings, nor the magic of beauty around us;

But to delight in him, telling his praises aloud?—

Hush! 'tis a mystic hour, for the soul of the mighty departed Fills the unconscious air, broods with its blessing above:

Well may we ask of our hearts, and well may they fervently answer, Now in this moment of awe, why they have held him so dear!

Is it because he was great—of a large majestical presence,

Keen with observant eyes, bright with a wavering smile?

Is it because he was poor, the son of illiterate peasants,

And from the clods of clay sprang to his fame at a bound?

Others have done so as well—have swung through the arc of ambition, And at the height of its curve leapt into glory at once:

Is it because he was wrong'd—was shunn'd by the men who had sought him, Taunted with guilt not his own, left, when he totter'd, to fall?

Others have been so as well—yea, have writhed when some squatted obscene thing Over their fair white robes spirted its venom and fled:

Is it because he was blest with the heart and the tongue of a freeman, Daring to feel, and more, daring to utter and do?

Others have been so as well—full many a treasured apostle

Lies in our sacred soil, speaks to us still from the grave:

Is it because he was cursed with the ban of a traitorous priesthood,

Who on the throne of God rear'd the Colossus of hell?

Others have been so, alas!—from the inaccessible Shakespeare

Down to the bards who sing under his shadow to us:

Or is it this, that he came like a crown'd unfetter'd Prometheus, Kindling all thoughts of his time into the fire of song? Truly he did it;—but yet, through the length and the breadth of our island, Others have done it as well—others are doing it now.

No there is something more than the mournful romance of his rising, More than his patriot's heart, more than his music of love;

Deeper than all, there lies one sweet irrepressible instinct

Which through a hundred years makes that we cling to him still:—

Tis, that he just was A Man—a man in the midst of his brethren,

Human in all his ways—human, and yet how divine!

He was a man like us—a saint by turns and a sinner,

Striving with horrors within, yearning for light from above:

Yea, and the Light has come, and the faults are forgiven for ever,

Lost in the blaze of Love, drown'd in the welcome of Home!

Therefore, because his heart lies open and quivering before us,

Shaken with pangs of grief, vivid with thrills of delight,

Therefore, we love him so well,—for his weakness as well as his wonder,—

Not that he struggled alone, but that he struggled and fell; So that, as brothers and friends, we can bask in the sun of his genius,

Prizing its rosy warmth more than its splendour of noon:—

Therefore, though evil and few were the days of the years of his sojourn— Though not his true brave soul, neither his noble desires,

Neither his poignant wit, and his wondrous Aurora of fancies, Neither his genial heart, mellow and ripe to the core;

Though none of these could avail to lengthen the path of his sunset— He is immortal still, safe in his Eden afar:

Safe in the breasts of his kind, for where freemen are gather'd together

There shall his name be known, there shall his spirit appear—

Moving in eloquent flame from the depths of Canadian forests

Down to the tropic floods, over the isles of the sea,

CENTENARY POEMS.

Over the southern main to the grand Australian empire,

Thence by those scented shores round into freedom again;
But, in his own dear land, never flickering once for an instant—
Still on a stalwart race steadily shining and fair;
Shining on heather and hill, from the snow-cover'd shores of the Orkneys
Down over baffled Tweed into the Marches of old—
Down by the fatted farms and the populous cities of England,
Down where the western cliffs throb to the shock of the wave.
So shall the peasant-bard, the first-born son of the people,
Come to his own once more, sing to his fellows again:
Till from the young men's lips and the tuneable throats of the maidens
Ever the soul of Burns passes in music away.



By J. STANYAN BIGG.

ONE OF THE SIX RECOMMENDED FOR PUBLICATION BY THE JUDGES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

I.

A HUNDRED times, with clangorous shout and din,
Have tower and steeple hail'd the New Year in;
A myriad brazen throats, a hundred times,
Have widely chanted forth their Christmas chimes;
A hundred times the ancient world hath rolled
Out of the lap of summer, warm with gold,
Into the bleaching wind and drenching rain;
Since first the wondrous peasant felt the air,
Since first above his head a mother's prayer
Went fluttering up to God, amid the angelic train.

II.

No royal palace was prepared for him;

No silken courtiers slid from room to room,

Gathering together in the gorgeous gloom

Of purple hangings, drooping rich and dim;

For him no silver cressets shed their light,

No eager joy-bells sounded through the night

CENTENARY POEMS.

From city minster, or from village tower; No loud "hurrahs," sent from deep-chested men, Lifted the midnight mist from off the glen In celebration of his natal hour; No hush of deep expectance filled the earth; No cry rose rich with gladness at his birth. The noble revelled at his sumptuous hall; The beauty bloomed and languished at the ball; The drowsy miller scolded at the mill; The peasant slept beneath the misty hill; The heavens were still; no shaggy lightnings came To burn the midnight in their eager ire; No mighty portent with a pen of fire Scribbled upon the dark the poet's name: He came, and no man knew it; no man knew The wondrous boon to Scotland given; That there—beneath that grim and wintry blue— A glorious Poet, strong and true, Had newly dropp'd from heaven!

Ш

Nature herself lay still, and dumb, and cold;
Gone were her summer garments fringed with gold,
Her gorgeous sunsets streak'd with crimson bars—
Darkling in violet depths, shot through with light,
Deepening in splendour as the enchantress, Night,
Gathered and cream'd the dim light into stars.
Gone were her balms and blooms; her hum of bees;
Her sweet-mouth'd zephyrs toying with the trees;

40

CENTENARY POEMS.

Her honied murmurings under hedge-rows dim,
Where happy lovers spent their evening hours;
Her festival array of cups and flowers,
Full of rich nectar to the fiery brim;
Gone were the banquet and the golden sheen,
The lights were out, the revelry was o'er:
Rapture, and mirth, and music were no more;
And she, who erst-while was a crowned Queen,
Shiver'd a beggar at her palace door.
Giving scant welcome to the new-born child,
She seized him in her stiff arms, lank and cold,
And held him out upon the wintry wold,
To look upon the desolation, strange and wild,
Which weirdly shudder'd down, on farm and fold.

And held him out upon the wintry wold,

To look upon the desolation, strange and wild,
Which weirdly shudder'd down, on farm and fold,
In rain and sleet, and silent-falling snow—
Wrapping the heavens in a pall above,
And the dead earth in a white shroud below.

IV.

A wintry path, a future thick with gloom
Solid as adamant, before him lay,
Through which the Poet cleft his lonely way,
'Mid menace and reproach and muttering doom,
Into the dawning of that brighter day
Which now has settled down upon his tomb.
For Nature hath a Spartan mother's heart,
And to prepare her noblest for their part
In the stern strife and struggle, she ordains
Rude tasks, hard fare, and bitter rounds of pains—

Knowing the heroic stature is built higher

By toil and suffering, and the hero shows

Grandest and kingliest when his forehead glows

Beneath that burning zone, the martyr's crown of fire.

٧.

And so he grew and wrestled for the right;
True Man! true Bard! who battled with the strong;
And having crown'd his poverty with song,
He brought it boldly forth into the light,
Heedless of jibe or jeer; and all men sought
To see the wonder which the Bard had wrought;
Great, as though under some enchanter's rod,
A shapeless block of stone had shimmer'd out a god!

VI

He took his country to his inmost soul, And sang her joys and sorrows as his own;

And in his verse we hear her wild winds moan,
The rapid rustle of her brooks, and roll
Of her rude rivers, as they dash and foam
In tawny fury round the shepherd's home.
Her Doric speech, her heart of simple truth,
Her piety and strength, her tales of ruth,
Her fireside legends, and her wild romance,
Glitter and gather in a rustic dance,
Laughing in garlands of perpetual youth,

Within the magic circle of his rhymes;
And Scottish fairies ring their silver chimes,
Goblin and ghost, warlock and witch uncouth,
And all the marvels of the olden times
Troop forth at his behest;
And every terror of his native land
Shakes out its elf-locks, bares its bony hand,
And every sportive whim, at his command,
Sits down the Poet's guest.

VII.

Laughter and tears were at his nod,
Humour and wit ran sparkling rich as wine;
And at the rare carousal, half divine,
He sat amidst his subjects, like a god,
Waited upon by satyrs.

Like a bee.

He sipp'd sweet honey from the bitterest flower;
And, at his touch, the starkest wintry tree
Rain'd down its apples in a golden shower.
Young men and maidens, whisp'ring, still rehearse
Their joys and sorrows in his manly verse;
His witching words still well o'er budding lips,
Mantling soft cheeks in luscious dimpledips
And innocent laughters of the ancient prime;
And still at hearthstone and at rural fair
Old men and matrons, heeding not that Time
Hath furrow'd cheek and brow, and blanch'd the glossy hair,
Chuckle and murmur o'er the magic rhyme,
Brimful of life and light, and all youth's dainty fare,

Nature, full-lipp'd, was ringing in his heart,
And though the wounded Poet felt the smart
Of poverty, yet, like a bird in spring,
Soul full of music, he did nought but sing,
And in the choral whole, he grandly filled his part.





VII.

BY THOMAS HENRY, BELFAST.

FIRST PRIZE AT THE BELFAST COMPETITION.

AMID all changes, evermore unfolded

By mental throe, by accident of time,

Mankind shall venerate the bards who moulded

Their thoughts of beauty into shape sublime.

Oh, bards! who shine along life's desert places,

Whose song to hearts athirst, like dew returns,

Affection hails ye with profound embraces,

And bows before the memory of Burns.

For Nature loved him—in his soul implanted
A manifold delight of rocks and streams,
And flowers and dear companions—and he chanted
In many tones his rainbow-coloured dreams.
She bared the human bosom to his vision,
Till its mysterious scrolls were all unfurled,
And rolled his thoughts in melodies elysian
That sound for ever o'er and o'er the world.

He sings of love and beauty; and the glory
Of his own land grows brighter in his song;
He gives new life to heroes of old story,
He battles for the right, he smites the wrong.
See! Mammon-worshippers grow small before him,
They shrink upon his path to Freedom's van,
From whence he sings, with Hope's fair banner o'er him,
Of universal brotherhood for man.

The song is never silent; earth grows older;
Men live and die; states fall or spring to life;
The columns topple, and the turrets moulder—
Waging with Time unprofitable strife.
And though the power of error yet aboundeth,
Truth wins new fields unmarked by flame or gore,
Where still, amid all change, that song resoundeth
From heart to heart, on every sea and shore.

Oh, Poet! in the light of that fair morning,

While the Three Isles make merry o'er thy birth,
They must remember, when thy wreath adorning,
Woe made thee wear a crown of thorns on earth.

Joy melts to pity o'er that recollection,
And Pity cries, "Root out your fathers' shame;
Plant the prolific seed of generous action
In the bright sunshine of the poet's fame."

Then, come away! beyond unrisen ages, Lo! Time's lethean waves, still rolling on,

CENTENARY POEMS.

Break o'er the prostrate forms of kings and sages,
Once big with promise as a summer dawn.
Drowned, overshadowed, hushed their ghostly voices,
Their literal names confined to crumbling urns,
While the wide earth, from pole to pole, rejoices
In the great peasant-poet, Robert Burns.



VIII.

The Bundredth Birth-Dny.

BY HENRY FLETCHER, DUNDONALD, COUNTY DOWN.

SECOND PRIZE AT THE BELFAST COMPETITION.

'MID Winter's wild storms, and Obscurity's gloom,
The sun of his age in his dawning appears—
There rises thy Burns, Caledonia, whom
All ages shall shrine in their "praises and tears!"

A hundred gay garments thy valleys have worn,
A hundred snow mantles thy summits sublime,
Since thy simplest, yet mightiest poet was born
To a fame unimpaired or by tempest or time.

Hail, son of the peasant! hail, genius divine!

Immortal one, sprung from a cottage of clay!

The millions whose lot is as lowly as thine

Look exultingly back on thy advent, to-day!

Tis our pride and our glory, though sentenced to plod Till the earth to its bosom shall fold us again, That the "nobles of nature," the "princes of God," Arise from the ranks of the lowliest men. His lyre, like the summer eve's odorous breath,
Sighs soft round the cabin on mountain or moor,
It gladdens the cot of the hamlet and heath,
And hallows the humble abodes of the poor.

It goes with the bark as it bounds o'er the brine,
It is echoed by "wild distant shores'" rocky caves;
O'er the hearts of the homeless its sympathies shine,
Where the "wan moon is setting behind the white waves;"

Linked to music that floated o'er "burnies and braes,"
Over Scotia's moorlands and mountains of yore,
That fanned the wild patriot fire to a blaze,
Or mingled with red battle's dissonant roar.

The song of his sorrow, the wail of his woe,
Appeal to the heart and the tear-moistened eye,
Like the strains of melodious lament that might flow
From a lorn angel lost to his home in the sky!

To her favourite son Caledonia's muse

Came down from the cliffs that have throned her so long,
Through his soul the deep patriot tide to diffuse,

Which wildly welled forth in rich torrents of song.

To bind on the brow of her high-minded bard,
Whom she trained mid the toils of the lowliest life,
That manly and stern independence which dared
The conflict of fortune, nor sank in the strife.

CENTENARY POEMS.

Great Nature's high priest—through her temple abroad
Shall the torch of our worship be lit at thy fire;
Through beauty, sublimity, rising to God,
With the woods, and the winds, and the waves for our choir

His nativity's anthem the winter winds hymned—
Alas! 'twas a winter that passed not away!
A life that the darkest despondency dimmed
With the premature close of a gloom-shrouded day.

Let his spirit, its errors and sufferings past,
Repose in the halls of the happy and free,
Quaff bliss by the board of Walhalla, at last,
Or roam through the isles of Eternity's sea!





IX

3 Boice from the West.

BY MARY J. KATZMANN, HALIPAN, N.S.

Where purple hill tops bask in light, and flowery vales are fair, Where golden broom and heath-bells deck "the bonnie banks o' Ayr;"

Far in the old poetic past—where misty memories lie
Beneath the frosted rime of eld—a century gone bye.
When shining winter mantled earth in vesture snowy white,
And midnight stars together sang their song of living light,
Through the dim cloisters of the sky that held the coming morn,
A band of fairy voices sang, "A poet child is born."
Softly the elfin music fell in mellowing cadence there,
And woke the drowsy echoes round a Cottage-home of Ayr—
Where the three shadowy sisters spun strange web and woof of
strife,

For him who slept within the hush of awful new-born life.

They flung the poet mantle round—that strange mysterious garb,—

That hides amid its folds of light the arrow and the barb,—
They touched the wakening spirit then with fancy's radiant
wand,

And planted in immortal soil rare seeds from fairy land:

Thus waving magic circles round the cradle where he lay, In token of his heritage;—the music died away.

Years dropped into the lap of time—the child became a man,
Winning his rich inheritance despite the iron ban
Of empty rank and shining gold—superior to them all,
The subtle brain and poet heart o'erleapt the potent wall.
He proved there is no lineal claim, no birthright autocrat,
"The rank is but the guinea stamp—a man's a man for a' that"—
By "banks o' Doon," in "barley rigs," by "braes o' Ballochmyle,"
He dropped the shining links of song around his native isle,
Where the "wee mountain daisy" bloomed in white and crimson vest,

Or by the wild romantic loch where timid fowl had rest.

He held the glass to nature's face from folly's mask to free us,

Potent as "giftie's power to see ourselves as others see us."

He was the Champion of his kind—brave man and gentler

woman—

Yet claimed indulgence on the plea "to step aside is human."

Nature the free, the beautiful, his parent and his guide,

In moulding this her worshipper, "no prentice hand she tried."

Alike in days of "smiling spring," or when "the hay was mown,"

In "chill November's surly blast," or "winter's angry zone,"

He shrined all things in Nature's realm with "thoughts and words that burn,"

Learning from all the world-wide truth, that "man was made to mourn."

But oftener gathered from the flowers—the stream, the field, the grove,

This better universal truth—man's watchword, "God is love"—He sang old Scotia's hero sons who roused them for the fray, With "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled"—a martial roundelay.

Yet strung his harp to tender tune, with touch so soft and airy,
When singing "bonnie Jean o' Ayr," or gentle "Highland
Mary."

To gay and grave, to peer and hind, his verse was for the masses,

But never fell so sweet and clear as when he sang "the Lasses"—Perchance his muse, too prodigal at times, astray was borne
In "Tam O' Shanter's" midnight ride and bold "John Barley
Corn."

With such a wealth of wit and power hard was it to determine Which way "the subject theme should go," turn out "a song or sermon,"

Yet often rose on lofty wing from meaner things away, When painting rural Scottish life—"The Cottar's Saturday."

His lays are now a nation's wealth, as "household words" they seem:

They sing them in their festal hours—through young love's rosy dream—

The very soil is classic ground where once his footsteps trod;

Still rests the shadow of his soul on Ayr's poetic sod;

Still through the lapse of misty years the admiring spirit turns,

Till Scotland's old heroic soil is called "The Land of Burns."

The harp that through its heathery braes poured forth its dulcet sound,

Still lingers in sweet echoes there along the haunted ground.

Where'er the sons of Scotia rove, o'er desert, field and flood,

Where breathes the old chivalric soul and flows the patriot blood;

Be it upon the tented field or sunburnt plains of toil,

Or where new Scotland's Mayflower blooms upon this western soil—

One touch can thrill their kindred hearts, borne o'er the deep along,

The charmed melody that lies in Burns's wealth of song.

Still leap their hearts in ecstacy to each familiar air,

Shrined in those burning words that find a living echo there.

Thus though a century has passed, crusting this hoary earth,

Since in the midnight, voices sang the poet ploughman's birth,—

Though time athwart throne—altar—hearth—with untamed wing hath brushed,

Since on the heath-clad banks of Ayr the singer's voice was hushed,

Leal to his memory, Scotia's sons revere the silent bard;
In death more glorious than in life—he reaps a rich reward.
To-day in every storied town, in each fair hamlet spot,
Where Scotchmen find a dwelling-place—and say where are they
not?—

His radiant memory they crown with wreaths of loyal fame, And write upon the scroll of time their Poet's deathless name. Fresh from the gathering dust of age his birthright robe he wears, His is no poor uncertain crown—no idle homage theirs! In him the poets all receive their legal right to sway: What love hath consecrated long they proudly crown to-day! It is not rank, it is not gold, nor valour's armed might,

That writes upon a nation's soul such characters of light

As those that live in Scottish hearts—o'er which their memory yearns

In the sweet stirring minstrelsy—the patriot songs of Burns.

Thus weave they now the gathered bays Time's fountain borne adown,

And gem with stars of pride and love the fresh immortal crown Of him who, lapped in quiet deep, sleeps mid the heather fair, Beside the banks he loved so well—the "bonnie banks o' Ayr."



BY ISABEL GRAHAME FULLERTON, GLASGOW.

An Angel grasp'd a lightning-ray,
That play'd upon the gates of heaven,
And, winging unto earth his way,
He fashion'd there the precious clay
To which that spirit-life was given.

Floated at will o'er palace-domes,
With fretted roof and festal hall,
Where peerless gems, and priceless tomes,
Shed lustre on patrician-homes;
The Angel Genius pass'd them all.

A lowly cot receiv'd the guest;
A peasant's brow his fingers mould,
And on a rustic mother's breast
He bids the young Immortal rest,
Toil's princeliest vassal, fame-enroll'd.

O wond'rous birth, in strange estate!

High aims, deep yearnings, from above,
Impulses pure and passionate,
Blind striving towards the good and great,
Resistless will, and quenchless love!

Visions like morning-dawn arise
Within the new created soul,
And from the altar in the skies
Fire flashes through the boy's dark eyes,
"That glow like sparks of living coal."

In the bold breast what workings wild,
Ere Genius make its empire known!
How often must the chosen child,
In varying mood, have wept and smil'd,
'Mid seeming compeers, still alone!

The minstrel, in youth's vernal dream,

To labour bent with earnest brow;

For wingèd steed, the sullen team;

For classic fount, the minnow-stream;

For poet's lyre, the peasant's plough.

But manly vigour mark'd his tread,

And health and hope life's wants supplied;
In daily toil for daily bread,
The wild weed, where the ploughshare led,
That patriot-spirit glorified.

Freely to him the village maid
Gave all her dower, a guileless heart:
The work-day world would round him fade,
When vesper-star and birken-glade
Invited Love, and foster'd Art.

A reaper on the golden plains,

There Nature's laureate bound his sheaves,
The warm blood dancing in his veins;
And from his heart the undying strains
Thrown lightly off as autumn leaves.

Genius, thus nurst in cot and glen,

Like sunlight through the land spread wide;

Years brought the due applause of men,

But in renown what profit then?

Life's bark launch'd on a ruthless tide.

The fancy's play, the soul's unrest,
Woke sympathies but faint and few,
Each coarser instinct in the breast,
The revel and the reckless jest,
Were kindred to the Age he knew.

And word and deed left withering trace,
By Fashion elsewhere venial found:
Unpanoplied by pride of place,
By pride of wealth, or pride of race,
Disown'd he was, yet not discrown'd.

The prophet, in the days of yore,
Receiv'd no honour from his own:
The Poet all his sweet love-lore
Rehearsed amid the billows' roar,
And sorrow nerved each thrilling tone.

Perchance had Heaven his living date
Unto these riper times assign'd,
His might have proved a worthier fate:
Now men more wisely estimate
The worth of manliness and mind.

Generous, pitying, sincere,
Impetuous, ardent, unrestrain'd,
Through quicksands that beset him here,
The hand, alas! was weak to steer—
The heart no shelt'ring haven gain'd.

Yet pleasure-tempted, fame-allured,
Unspoil'd by consciousness of power,
His dauntless manhood well endured
The brightness of its day obscured,
Resentless in life's bitterest hour.

Hence summon'd in his fading prime,
When all, save genius, had grown old,
O through the lowering clouds of time,
May the rapt eye have seen sublime,
A sinless paradise unfold!

To devious paths he might incline,
Fond memories mingled with regret;
Yet ours to trust the Blood divine,
Shed for each son of Adam's line,
On that crown'd brow its seal had set.

We but recall his gifts and wrongs,
His lofty hopes, his calm despair:
A Nation's tears embalm his songs;
Their burden to the heart belongs;
They wake eternal music there.

And long as Scotland foremost stands
Amid the faithful and the free,
The words of BURNS, like living bands,
Shall link with her those stranger-lands,
Where'er our exiled brothers be.

The world shall still account him great,
Who, stinted of her corn and oil,
Ennobled want, confronted fate,
And, toiling, sang to consecrate
The annals of the sons of toil.

The spirit's lot, long since decreed,—
We blot each weakness from its story:
God giveth to the just his meed,
Yet breaketh not the bruised reed:
Who may arraign the Poet's glory?



BY THE REV. WM. BUCHANAN, AYR.

What means this ringing Jubilee?
This pæan of acclaim,
That sweeps around, from sea to sea,
A swelling surge of fame?
Have British legions won the day
Mid deadly fire and fight,
On fields of honour far away,
That shines this festal light?

Bright be the guerdon of the brave,
And choice their garlands wove,
Whose matchless arm defied the grave
Where furious squadrons strove!
Not for such warrior-brows elate
To-day are chaplets wrought;
The Hero whom we celebrate
A champion was of Thought!

We hail the name of him whose birth, One hundred years ago, Has taught his brothers o'er the earth, To think, to feel, to glow: Whose independent spirit fires
In countless thousands now;
Ay, and will burn till Truth expires,—
That Roman from the plough!

Who spurned the falsehoods of Pretence,
The insolence of Pride;
Who measured men by Worth and Sense,
And not by mere outside;
Who, from the mob that worshipped state,
Turned to the sterling few,
That honoured—what alone is great—
The Good, the Just, the True.

Who round the lot of lowly life

Has warmth and beauty flung;

Who shared its pleasures, cares, and strife,

And as he found them, sung;

Who in his own brief chequered course

Proved that though Fortune's ban

Goes far—too far—it need not force

Real manhood from a man.

Thy story, BURNS, a tale unfolds,
As thrilling as thy song;
Oh, that the age which now beholds
Might hate this crying wrong!
The cold neglect, contemptuous airs,
The cruel, callous sneers,
Proud Dulness towards Genius bears;
And, worse mayhap, the tears,

The maudlin tears which only fall
As soon as men are dead,
And flow, full-coursing, down the pall
Of Bards who wanted bread:
Those hypocritic tears accurst,
So like their ways and doom,
Who used to kill the Prophets first,
And garnished next their tomb!

Away, away, the ignoble train!
What duty have they here?
Could ever Poet's ardent strain
Reach to their frozen ear?
Could Intellect's bright flashing beam
Their barren being start?
Or Feeling's glorious headlong stream
Run rushing through their heart?

But come, all men, true human-souled,

• Whatever your degree,

Men formed of honest Nature's mould,

And, like that Nature, free.

When love, and hate, and pity's yearn,

And gladness sway by turns,

For ye, indeed, should crown the cairn,

The towering cairn of Burns!

He gave a voice to every mood,
A tongue to every scene;
His Scorn fell like a lashing flood.
Electric wit between;

And Satire's blast, rough, roaring, loud, Came on with driving hail; How shrunk the shivering liar, cowed, Behind his rotten pale!

But humble Hope, and Virtue pure,
And Faith divinely calm,
In his affection stood secure,
And poured their holy psalm,
Alike from Loudoun's manse of love,
Or cottar's kitchen hall,
And breathed their souls to One above—
The Father of us all.

The truly reverend he revered,

Who lived, not lipped, their creed;

Who served the God they felt and feared,
By righteous word and deed:

Nor till in Scotland's homesteads fair

Devotion's lamp grows dim,

Can die the fervour of that prayer,

The music of that hymn!

And yet how lambently it shone
To cheer our human sight—
To clasp the world in one broad zone
Of pure and living light!
Bathed in its lustre, O how sweet
The wild flowers round us spread!
The mountain-daisy, at our feet,
Lifts up its modest head.

The birds sing blyther on the tree,
Or twitter in the brake;
The bees they hum more busily,
And sweeter honey make;
Fairies foot lighter on the lea,
And dress in gayer green;
Fate wears familiar mystery,
When he holds Halloween.

His lyrics stir our British blood
Wherever Britons toil,
Felling the far Canadian wood,
Digging th' Australian soil;
Where Northern Winters hold their reign,
Or Eastern Summers long,
They bind our sons in one grand chain
Of Sentiment and Song!

The soldier once by conquest led—
So old historians write—
Slept with his "Homer" 'neath his head
To nerve him for the fight—

Wherever Freedom's battle's fought,
And patriots seek the fray,
They'll rouse them to that trumpet-note,
Heroic "Scots wha hae!"

Hail, Scotia's Bard! long shall be felt
That lyre so many-stringed,
To soothe, to madden, or to melt.
What words like his are winged?
One age! and can we deem it hard
That but one Burns appears?
Nay, men are blest with such a bard
Once in a thousand years!

For he shall live, and still live on
When all those years are past;
While harvests wave, while rivers run,
While pangs and passions last;
He'll be, till Nature's final hour
Looks wan in Nature's face,
A Name, a Presence, and a Power,
To move the human race!

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I



XII.

In Ode to the Scottish Tyre.

BY WILLIAM FORSYTH, ABERDEEN.

ONE OF THOSE HIGHLY COMMENDED BY THE JUDGES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

STROPHE I.

DEAR Scotland's Lyre!

Sweet lyre of that old minstrel land
That never lacked a master's hand;
Or martyr's faith, or patriotic fire,
The singer to inspire;
Or sweet emotion, pearling all the eyes
Of listening ages with responsive tears,

Of listening ages with responsive tears,
To clothe with love the memorable years,
To give the suns new promise as they rise!
Ring out for ever to thy white-robed band,
Who sit among the old melodious dead,
Each in the light which he himself has shed;

With resonant command,
Rolling down the old renowns,
Round the grand old laurel crowns—

Rolling down the songs of praise, Through the old heroic days-Rolling down the words of sages-Rolling down the voice of ages, In deep harmonious thunders through the land. But loudest ever to the loved of all, The household friend, the bard of hut and hall, Who showed a loving nation, face to face, Its inmost spirit glorified in song; Then passed away into his kingly place, Among the foremost of the white-robed throng, Who walked behind the prophets. Evermore! Peal out his joyous strain, as heretofore, Love on the hand, and rapture on the wire; To join with wider joy the wider choir, Whose immemorial sea of song resounds Its ancient anthems, like the deep, that bounds The golden circle of our sacred shore.

STROPHE II.

The Muses heard him, singing at the plough,
And on his head their inspiration poured;—
Thus, when Apollo doubly bent his bow,
And made a harpstring of the ringing chord,
The souls of men a new-born pleasure found
In that sweet sound,
That rang through all green Thessaly of old;
Till from the hunter's bow the lyre of gold.
Made perfect by the god,

Poured light and tenderness through ancient lays, And even the Olympian abode

Resounded to its praise.

And when the muse her mantle threw Around the stately peasant boy,

She bade him sweep the lyre anew—
O'er all its ancient chord of joy;—
Shrive his people's inmost spirit,

Tell them all their fathers' glory,

Teach their children how to wear it,

Widening still their noble story;

Words of light on golden pages,

Pealing through the choral ages. And his lyre is ever pealing,

And his lyre is ever pealing

Ever pealing,

Ever pealing,

Ever pealing far and near.

Where's the ear that doth not hear,

Where's the heart it doth not cheer—

That old lyre for ever pealing,

To the minstrel's hand unsealing

All the heart's sweet fountains, deep and dear?

EPODE I.

Honour to those who spend contented days
In making fair the paths of other men—
Fountains in deserts, planting shady ways
Where weary feet may rest and rise again.
And what, although his path was hard,
And what although his joy was marred

By poverty and wrong?

Above his fortunes and his foes,
The lonely peasant youth arose,

A paladin of song. And with him rose the peasant race, And looked the proudest face to face, With dauntless heart and honest hand, The strength of their heroic land. He brought new sunshine to their fields, New pleasure to their humblest bields, New hope to light their lowly ways, New light to cheer them all their days, And beauty grew beneath his hand More beautiful: with sweet surprise, Men, gazing through his ardent eyes, Saw new-born glory in the land. His very laughter loud and free, The music of his manly mirth, Is ringing over all the earth, And all the islands of the sea;

nd all the islands of the sea And his sadness

Was a gladness, And the passion of his tears

And the passion of his tears

Left a pleasure,

Left a treasure,

Left a blessing to the years—

Touched our hearts with deep emotion, Glowing like their purple tide, While his own was breaking slowly, His so loved, so lost, so lowly; And we grieve not that he died,
But that he died neglected wholly,
He who is a nation's pride.
Crown the wine-cup, wreathe the lyre,
Fill the measure of his fame;
See from eyes with triumph beaming
Sweet atoning tears are streaming,
While from far, across the ocean,
Comes a shout of deep devotion,
Swelling louder, rising higher,
At the utterance of his name!
To overflow with love our former shame.

ANTISTROPHES I. AND II. Alas! the hour when pride and passion met, In his green wilderness of noble years, Though love looks on more loving for regret, And like a mother smiles away her tears. But whether saints or sages, Who are they who blame the ages, That they pass not in their story, Ever garmented with light? Let such condemn the man, Whose head is clothed with glory, Like an Alp against the dawn, Because his feet are shadowed by the night. True! as from other times he bore Their beauty, he some darker traces Of their rude old fashions wore;

And swept along in all men's faces,

With a noble ardour glowing, With a fearless vehemence showing, Every passionate thought that swayed him-Just the man that nature made him. Rough and real, kind and free, Brave and true as man could be; Brown with days of honest toil, Loosely robed in manly graces, Bearing something of the soil With him to the highest places! Pulsing through a thousand years, The land's old life-blood filled his veins; Pulsing through a thousand years, The land's old spirit fired his strains. These were not perfection wholly; Ere we censure such as he, Blame our fathers' casual folly-Blame their ancient Bacchic glee.

Yet thou, O Lyre, hast seen repentant tears
Roll very hot and heavy down his cheek;
And heard the sigh that rose through faded years,
With memories that the tongue forbore to speak;
And thou hast seen his heart, by passion torn,
Unveil itself before the Father's face;
And that proud lip of thunder, clothed with scorn,
Grow tremulous with child-like tenderness;
And healing sorrow watch him all the night,
And love subdue the ardour of his eyes,

And passion fade before the blessed light That came to guide the Minstrel to the skies.

So, let the shadow sleep beside the clay,

EPODE II.

And that great front that rises through the past, No longer overcast, Rest in the light of Love's immortal ray; Through all our hearts, from prince to peasant boy, Ring out for ever to the glorious dead, Who round our hills such sweet effulgence shed, And touched the ages, as they pass, with joy; Who stood within the sunsets clothed in flame, And sang the glory of the warrior days, And rose, with dawns prophetic, to proclaim More blessed morrows rising on our gaze; Who through our souls new streams of rapture poured, Whose tones of sweetness to the world belong, Whose mirth still radiates round our festive board. While household joys are sweeter for his song; Who o'er the earth has rolled his wondrous strain, As those vast rivers of the torrid West Roll hot and full their waters through the main, To make the soil of distant lands more blest. And we, in grasping England's royal hand, Bear in our van the minstrels of the land, All robed and glorified in their renown, Each with his lyre and his immortal crown, Pealing around us one triumphant flood Of song, that pulses through our hearts like blood;



CENTENARY PORMS.

That fired our fathers in the days of old.

That made them love their freedom more than gold—
Their heather hills more than the myrtle grove—
Their country with a more than filial love;
And while that love goes round the sacred shore,
With all the fervid passion felt of yore,
Through all the grandeurs of the common name
Still streams the lustre of our Minstrel's fame:

VIOLET



XIII.

BY JAMES MACFARLAN, GLASGOW.

In lonely hut and lordly hall a mighty voice is heard,

And 'neath its wild bewitching spell, the bravest brows are bared.

From Scotland's hills and twilight glens, to far Columbian floods,

It stirs the city's streets of toil, and wakes the solitudes;

It speaks no triumph reaped with swords, it brings no conq'ring

cry

Of buried horrors, battle-crown'd and veiled with victory; But hearts leap loving to its note, and kindling bosoms glow, To hail the Poet born to fame, a hundred years ago.

O, like a glorious bird of God he leapt up from the earth,
A lark in song's exalted heaven, a robin by the hearth;
O, like a peerless flower he sprang from Nature's meanest sod,
Yet shedding joy o'er every path by human footstep trod.
How shall we tell his wond'rous power, how shall we say or sing
What magic to a million hearts his deathless strains can bring?
How men on murkest battle-fields have felt the potent charm,
Till sinking valour leapt to life and strung the nerveless arm!

How hearts in drearest loneliness have toiled through barren brine,

The only glimpse of sunshine there, his pictures "o' langsyne." How far amid the western wilds, by one enchanting tune,
The wide Missouri fades away in dreams of "bonny Doon;"

Where hearts and hands renew the pledge—sweet pledge of other vears—

That sacred "auld acquaintance" vow, the light of parting tears.

O: blessed be the brawny arm that tore presumption down,

That snatched the robe from worthless pride, and gave to toil a

crown;

That smote the rock of poverty with song's enchanting rod, Till joy into a million hearts in streams of beauty flow'd;

And while that arm could stretch to heaven and wield the lightning's dart,

It brought the glorious sunshine too, to cheer the humblest heart:.

For free as Spring, his gladsome muse danced o'er the daisied plain,

Or rang in organ-gusts of praise through grandeur's mightiest fane.

Then blest for ever be the soul that linked us man to man,

A brotherhood of beating hearts—God's own immortal plan:

While Labour, smiting at his forge, or stalking at his plough,

Looks up with prouder soul to find God's finger on his brow—

Feels man is man, though russet-robed and smacking of the soil;

And all are brothers, whether born to titles or to toil.

Then pledge his mem'ry far and near, although the hand be dust
That oft has swept the golden lyre, that ages cannot rust.

No sun of time e'er sets upon the empire of his fame,
And still unwearied is the wing that bears abroad his name.

There may be grander bards than he, there may be loftier songs,
But none have touched with nobler nerve the poor man's rights
and wrongs.

Then, while unto the hazy past the eye of fancy turns, Raise high the fame and bless the name of glorious Robert Burns.



XIV.

BY THE HON. MRS NORTON.

A HUNDRED Years! Does that recurring chime Sound strange to those who "take no note of Time?" While to the young such slow-returning day Seems but a seal Time sets upon Decay.

Yea, it hath sealed Decay! From ruined walls, More hoar, more moss-grown, many a fragment falls; Churchyards, where once the passionate mourners wept, Keep but faint trace of where their loved ones slept; On war-fields, cursed by many a dying groan, The partridge builds her nest, the corn is sown; And for fierce clarions of a hostile throng Lo! children's laughter, and the reaper's song! Huge forest oaks are gone whose age was told By palsied grandsires linked with "days of old;" The windlestrae waves bare where once they stood, And slender saplings screen a thinner wood. CHANGE is around us! Change, whose busy spade Lends the old sexton, Time, his younger aid; And, with a brisk ambition, buries all Which Death can silence, or Decay enthrall.

What do they bury? Men. They hide away Dead hearts, that moulder in the kindred clay; But something yet survives from sire to son-Death cannot bury what those men have done. The holy Creed which vanished lips have taught-The Freedom which the Patriot's blood hath bought-The keen invention of some vigorous mind Which gleaned from Science gifts for all mankind— The plans Philanthropy at length matured To lessen griefs by weaker souls endured-These are not Death's! nor Death's the POET'S SONG! Vainly the centuries shall roll along, Vainly the generations disappear-That Life had sap that springs from year to year! Who strikes one chord of Nature's music true Fills the void world with echoes ever new: Men listened who are gone, but still the sound Gathers the newer generations round; And the one thought of one man's brief bright morn Fathers the thoughts of men as yet unborn; Leaves them a younger life when his departs-Heritors of his claim on human hearts.

A Hundred Years! When twice that time has sped,. Fresh be the music of the vanished dead!

Could we count up—instead of years—the souls

Which, through such years, poetic power controls,

By vaguest millions could they reckoned be,

Or by thy sands, thou world-encroaching sca?

Count but one Poet—count the myriad throngs That echo Burns's words, and Burns's songs; How many hearts have read with honest pride, That "man's a man" with wealth and rank denied? How many, woo'd, through him, their "Bonnie Jean?" How many, mourned their "Mary" in his strain? How many, lingered o'er the Arcadian light That made the "Cottar's Saturday" seem bright? How many, felt with martial ardour filled, Hearing his "Scots wha hae" by music thrilled? How many tears have dropped like ocean brine, When clasping hands have hallowed "Auld Lang Syne?" We know not! but the thoughts that poets have (Heaven's part in them) can fill no earthly grave; Thought is man's soul, and lives beyond his time, Immortal—even when clothed in simplest rhyme; Like beacon-fires that shone in days of yore, Onward they shoot, and gather more and more, Still waking, as they pass from mind to mind, An answering light to lights long left behind. Nor let us murmur that such fire must be Made of the dead boughs of an earthly tree, For flickering flames alone to earth are given, The lights that moveless shine are set in heaven. Poet and man (not angel), "earth to earth!" Dead are thy days of sorrow and of mirth; Dead, the quick passionate heart whose pulse beat full, In different measure from the cold and dull. And dead are all thy faults! The reckless jest, Born of a baffled hope and sad unrestLove's wild delights that fevered every vein-Wit's careless words from an excited brain-Thirst for the laurel-wreath disdain might grudge-And warm temptations, which the untempted judge, Who "know not what's resisted"—these are gone: Bury their memory 'neath his funeral stone; Let the long summers seal them in repose; Let the drear winters blot them with their snows; And own him one of those great Master-minds, Set in all stations-made of various kinds-But howsoever made, raised from our ken Above the level of more common men. We are blind judges. HE shall judge who lends The various talents for mysterious ends. What though perverted sight can quick descry The mote that blurs a brother's kindling eye? Enough for us to hope—enough to know The gift of genius is God's gift below. In what to us seem wavering sparks, may lurk Fire that yet glows to do the Maker's work: And minor discords in the Poet's song May teach a lesson, though we learn it wrong.

All cannot tread alike who onward climb
Through the wild passes of the untracked Time,
Nor all keep patient heart and patient speech,
While mountain tops still top the heights they reach.
Paths set with flowers some tempted feet delay—
Brakes, rough with thorns, the weaker wanderer stay—

And wistful pauses of discouraged rest
Come to the wisest, bravest, strongest, best,
Who see, with mournful eyes of fond regret,
The "meliora latent," latent yet.
Enough for us, whatever flaw man sees,
The retrograde is not for feet like these;
The aggregate of thought in sentient man
Hath burst the gloom, and struggled to the van;
And though a varying strength may arm the host,
Their heavenly standard never can be lost.
"Onwards!" is written there in gleams of light;
The watchword of a still unfinished fight,
Whose wrestling strength shall yet prevail, and be
Crowned in heaven's breaking dawn, with victory!

A Hundred Years! When this day comes again, Scarce one of all now living will remain.

Some infant, born even while I write this rhyme, Perchance shall linger out that stretch of time, And all the elder of each meeting throng

Be dead like him—the Master of sweet song!

Within the circuit of those hundred years

Eyes that are weeping shall be sealed from tears;

Hearts that beat now, shall rest—no records tell

The strong temptations under which they fell;

And women's prayers of yearning wild appeal,

To bid the men who "loved" them try to feel,

Shall grate no more; but, garnered up in heaven,

Find gentler answer than on earth was given.

But Master still of Time, dead Burns shall be—
His words still watchwords for the brave and free—
His songs still love songs to the young and fond—
His fame still linking with the time beyond.
Much hath been lost within the vanished years,
But not His power o'er human smiles and tears;
And when the Hundredth Year again returns,
More shall be lost—but not the name of Burns.

- ---

BY T. WATSON, ARBROATH.

LEAVE ye now the laurel growing,
Break no holly boughs to-day;
Evermore the "leaves and berries"
Round his head will rustling play.
Bring ye but the flowering aloe,
Add it to the wreath he wears,
For the tree that fadeth never
Blooms but in a hundred years!

This memorial-day we greet him,
Dearest of the laurelled band:
If the tones of mortal voices
Vibrate in the spirit-land—
If the waves of earthly feeling
Beat upon the heavenly shore,
We would with our gratulations
Mingle our regrets no more.

Lands of bards, proscribed or banished,
Witness our atonement all—
Hear the mother of the nations
To her distant daughters call,

CENTENARY POEMS.

"Honour Burns, our bard immortal."

Hark! the vast response returns,

Booming o'er the world of waters,

"To the memory of Burns."

What to this were old ovations?

What the laurel crowns of Rome?

Thus our race delights to honour

Him—the bard of heart and home—

Who, for sake "o' puir auld Scotland"—

Unrequited while he breathed—

Left us such a tuneful treasure:

Never was the like bequeathed.

Yet hath France her loved Beranger,
Worthy of her greenest wreath:
Alien tongues their names may utter
Lovingly with mutual faith;—
So may Hope—her rainbow bending—
Bridge this day the narrow seas;—
Burns—Beranger—hope for nations
While they hallow names like these.

Wake the lyre—its greatest master
Had a harp of many strings;
Sing of him—he raised the lowly—
Almost hallowed homely things—
Opened up a world of beauty
All around—unseen before,
Where the weary rest at even,
And remember care no more.

But we have an evil spirit,

That the famous will defame,
Quick or dead—a ghoul insatiate—
England's scorn and Scotland's shame.
Hence, Detraction sanctimonious,
Take thy envious brood with thee—
Parasites, who, while they flourish,
Poison their upholding tree!

Yet the acorn of old Coila

Towers unscathed—a mighty oak,
Rooted in the heart of Scotland,
Proof against Time's felling stroke.
In its song-inspiring shadow,
Chaunt the minne-singer bands;
And its boughs are trees of vigour,
Branching over many lands.

Soul of Burns!—our kindred spirits
Greet thee this memorial-day—
Thee we send our love, by lightning
That requires no wiry way.
Thou hast passed the fatal river—
Found "thy blissful place of rest;"
But thy mantle, lost for ever,
Warms no other poet's breast.



XVI.

Genethliacon.

BY JOHN HOGGE DUFFY, LONDON.

ONE OF THOSE HIGHLY COMMENDED BY THE JUDGES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

Down the long vista of a Hundred Years,
Turn, Muse divine! a retrospective view;
And hall the Morn when, God-sent from the spheres,
BURNS the first breath of a Bard's being drew.

For thou, within the humble cot in Ayr,
Didst bend thee o'er the Peasant's lowly bed,
Those him thy immortality to share,
And placed an unseen glory round his head:

Attuned his our to emulate the strain
That fell, in natal welcome, from thy lyre;
Unacaded his eye to Beauty; and his brain
And heart touched with thy soul-awak'ning fire.

A Poet thus, and destined Prince of Song.

Though born in penury and bred in care,

He grew unknown amid the rustic throng,

And all their toils and sorrows learned to bear:

While fostering Nature showed the subtile lore Concealed around him in her simplest things; Taught him how Scotland's harp was tuned of yore, And gave the power to wake its silent strings.

He touched the chords! and clear, fresh music sprung
In wild deep thrills 'neath his creating hand:
Swept them again! a bolder measure flung,
And roused the genius of his native land.

Along her glens and mountains, banks and braes,
The Ploughboy's soul went forth in gusty song,—
Not the weak accents of school-polished lays,
But Scotia's loved rude Doric, sweet and strong!

'Neath the free canopy of heaven he stood,

Beside the furrow that his coulter turned,

And poured his heart in numbers like a flood,

That Art's restraining rules and trammels spurned.

Men heard entranced the spirit-stirring swell, Heroic, plaintive, loving, sad or gay, That charmed all bosoms with resistless spell, And dashed Pride's adamantine mail away. From cottage ingle up to lordly hall

The nameless Peasant's winged utterance flew,—

What was the spell held ear and heart in thrall?

The theme was Nature—and the Singer true!

Though griefs came fast, and dreaded ills oppressed,
Despondent toiling in his rugged fields,
The Poet's spirit her dear power confessed,
And felt the balm her rudest aspect yields.

In vain the Present dark'ning o'er him lowered,
And loomed the Future like a Polar night,—
His soul, with Song's sustaining pinions dowered,
Soared from dull earth to empyrean light.

There revelling, he rained rhyme-jewels down—Alas! on desert places! where they lay

Scarce prized, till by Time gathered in a crown

To shed above his brows Fame's brightest ray:

No kingly circlet, nor the light that throws

Round earth's red conquerors its lightning blaze;

The starry gems of Verse his wreath compose,

And theirs the sheen that o'er his forehead plays.

The glorious tale of Scotland's patriot day,
Of Bruce the brave, and Wallace wight, he sang;
And fired his country's pulse to madd'ning play,
As though a trumpet-call to battle rang.

Wherever men shall fight for fatherland-Wherever Liberty asserts her sway— Whilst Freedom lives, and Scotland's mountains stand, All hearts shall burn and bound 'neath' 'Scots who have'

The grand, fierce pæan ceased, and burst a strain, Low and despairing, of lost hope and love; So piteous, that for ever tears like rain Shall fall for "Mary," ta'en to heaven above.

The dirge died on the wailing wires; and rose

A kindred echo from his breast forlorn:

Again the strings were charged with mortal woes,

And sadly told that "Man was made to mourn."

The "sleekit, timorous wee beastie," cast

Forth from its feeble cell, the ploughshare found,
To bide unhoused the biting wintry blast,

Its careful nest in ruin strewed around;—

The smitten "Daisy" and poor "wounded Hare,"

The "owrie cattle," cowering from the cold,

And bird on "chittering wing,"—though racked with care,

All these his sympathetic heart could hold.

With tender pity and sweet mercy filled,

He shared with them the common rights of life;

Their suffering fate his breast responsive thrilled,

While waging with his own brave, tuneful strife.

For Courage dwelt with him,—his strength sustained 'Gainst the gaunt fiends that by his hearthstone sat, And taught him this,—To sternest Labour chained, And lot obscure, "A man's a man for a' that!"

Oh, grandest maxim e'er by poet taught!
Oh, golden legend of the sons of toil!
Oh, truth sublime! with highest meaning fraught,
To raise man up from earth's debasing soil!

Nor thus alone the strong-souled Peasant showed How humblest pathway may be nobly trod: His own firm foot ne'er left fair Honour's road, Nor veiled his eye, nor bowed but to his God.

And oft as comes the "Cottar's Night" of rest,
His six days' toiling bringing love and home,—
When wife and weans he has fondly prest,
And thinks of heaven and seeks the sacred tome:

Whilst o'er the Book divine he meekly bends,
And turns and scans the page with rev'rent eyes,
Whilst up to Mercy's throne his prayer ascends,—
A thought of Burns shall with the scene arise.

He pictured it!—but not to him was given

The placid place he saw, and loved, and sung;

Wild passions' tempests through his heart were driven,

And o'er his life a lurid grandeur flung.

Behind the storm-wrack of dire Want and Wrong,
That marred the splendour of his shining soul,—
As clouds o'er heaven are darkling swept along,
Yet show a broken glory as they roll,—

His sun-like light went down—not to the grave!

And left to scorn the world of little men,

Whose justice slept—till all too late to save

The mighty Singer death snatched from their ken.

His songs survive! and to his chosen maid

The Lover sings them, in the gloaming light;
In courtly hall, or bower, or sylvan glade,—

Where'er fond hearts true faith and fealty plight.

The mother's voice with their sweet music steals
In softer cadence o'er her cradled boy;
And with their strains the wearied worker feels
That e'en for him life has a glimpse of joy.

The sailor sings them, while the mountain wave
Leaps in white fury o'er the vessel's side;
And all unheeded yawns an ocean grave—
He thinks of home, and her who'll be his bride.

The soldier, too, whose ear loud battle fills,

And o'er whose head Death hangs his sable pall,

Those darling ballads of his native hills

This hour he'll sing, although the next he fall.

CENTENARY POEMS.

And where firm Friendship spreads the social board,—
Where BURNS's genial spirit glowed like wine,—
There still to him is warm libation poured
When loving-cups are pledged to "Auld langsyne."

His genius lives, enshrined in generous breasts,
And spreads with Britain's tongue from zone to zone:
The glory of his birth with Scotland rests,—
His fame the universe claims for its own!

~39965~

XVII.

What the wind said in the trees above Hurns' Grave,

ON THE 25TH OF JANUARY.

BY MRS ALFRED M. MUNSTER (MARY C. F. MONCK), BELFAST.

King of the people's minstrels! lord of the realm of Song!

The busy brain and the fiery heart have lain dust in dust for long:

Some who had loved thee living, lie quiet in kindred clay,

And some with whom life yet lingers, are thinking of thee to-day.

Oh passionate child of Genius! is thy heart so cold and still, That no subtle breath, through the coffined shroud, with a pulse of life doth thrill?

Wake! wake! for thy life-sought guerdon, a poet's wide-spread fame,

Triumphs, and pæans, and praises, are thine by the world's acclaim.

Wake! wondrous prince of peasants! nations besides thine own Are lauding the lays thou gavest thy native land alone.

Wake! for the air is ringing with plaudits of thee and thine—
The proudest are proud to honour the sons of the Ploughman's line.

Oh being of light and darkness! Oh idol of gold and clay!

Too late for thee, by full threescore years, do we hold our feasts to-day.

Low in thy narrow chamber, the worm is thine only guest,

And thou know'st not the snarl of envy, from the voices that laud thee best.

Too late! let them sing thy praises, and quaff the rich wine to thee,

That will not cancel one single hour of thy lonely misery.

Let them talk till they grow oblivious of the sorrow that hath gone by,

And forget how few were thy friends and hopes, when thou laid'st thee down to die.

Oh brother! the birk and heather that wave on thine own wild hills,

The broomy knowes, and the gowaned shaws, and the songs of the mountain rills;

The rosy fringed, gold-eyed daisies, the corn on the sloping leas—

How can the world forget thee, whose songs were of themes like these?

Never a dew-drop glistened, on the pearl-white buds of the thorn,

Never a glad lark singing, soared to the gates of Morn,

Never a soft glance met thee, never a deed of wrong,

But the shrine in thy breast gave upward its incense of burning song.

The golden fields of the harvess, the sough of the wind at night.

The glens and streams where the stars look down with a weird
and wavering light.

The commonest things of Nature, the scenes we pass heedless by, Grew lovely, and grand, and glorious, in the light of thy poet-eye.

Who shall presume to judge thee? is it the calm, cold voice Of him who smiles when his neighbour mourns, or frowns when the poor rejoice?

Is it the sainted icebergs, armed without and within.

That shall close in thy face the door of life, and mark thee a 'child of sin?

Is it the temperate pulses, that ne'er in their wildest heat
Could dream of a throb akin to thine, in its fierce tempestuous beat?
Is it the well-trained Christians, shielded from sin and shame,
Who, false to the law their Master taught, will ban the dead
Poet's name?

Ah! let us well remember, how winningly Pleasure smiled, When first in her courtly robes she burst on the peasant's homely child;

Let us think with what new strange power temptation came to thee.

With thy will untrained, and thy poet soul, and thy passions wild and free.

Let us think of the wild delirium, that followed thy brief renown, When they hailed the light that was soon to sink in darkness and silence down;

- They made thee a toy for their leisure, Oh is there no blame to them?
- Let us pause for the whispered answer, ere we judge thee and condemn.
- Let us sorrow for faults and follies, and wish that they ne'er had been,
- But the secret chamber of every heart hath its own black list I ween;
- Let us honour Queen Nature's laureate, and pray thou hast found above
- The judgment tempered with mercy, Heaven's patient, enduring love.

XVIII

BY JAMES PRITCHETT BIGG, TAVERSTONE.

- STRIKE your harps, all gifted singers, for this day must hear a strain,
- Worthy of the Age that asks us to bring back to it again
- Some gleams of that lofty spirit, of that passionate strength which yearns
- Through the bold, heroic sayings, and the songs of ROBERT BURNS:
- Songs that now are fondly murmur'd in whatever climes we roam,
- By mechanics at their benches, and by sailors splash'd with foam—
- As the early light of Sabbaths, welcome to a poor man's home!
- We know when Spring is coming by the flowers strewn in her way,
- And out of purple splendours rolls the rich, ripe, summer day;
- And a strange prophetic gladness would thrill Old Scotland's veins,
- She would know some fate approaching—hear the clank of golden chains—

Voices in her ear would whisper that her greatest Bard was born,

And a noise of merry welcoming would usher in that morn:
Nature, from her winter-slumber, would start in glad surprise
To feel among her shivering vales the warmth of summer skies;—
Soon every dusk and bosky dell would lift up flower-fill'd hands,
And birds would ring out spring-songs above the wondering lands,

While the sea rolled sounds of triumph across the gleaming sands!

Nay, ah, nay! Truth's voice is crying, and those visions all are o'er,

For that Day had Day's old wonders,—Night, her star wealth, nothing more,—

No Comet's fiery splendours came to teach men to adore,— And the gates of gorgeous mansions were all fasten'd as before, As Burns set out for glory from a peasant's cottage door.

Stern Poverty's hard lessons ever yield the bravest men,
For when Affluence gives five talents, she flings her children ten;
Keen winds may brace strong natures that would kill or blight
the weak,

As the sun oppressing cities does but tan the rustic's cheek.

Burns was the noblest proof of this as he delved his country's soil:

He was born to leave a radiance on the path of honest Toil; And he brought to his vocation a body strung by health, And a soul too independent to heed the frown of Wealth, Nor would he see the wisdom of Fashion's dainty rules, But dared to treat with rare contempt, the words of titled fools Who lean'd upon their ancestry, and scowl'd at bravest feats
Of strong men striding past them, with eyes fixed on higher seats.
For Burns sang those as Heroes, who, when hard press'd in strife.

Went down to meet their dangers, with arms full of crowded life. And the peasant, rising from his work, now lifts a prouder brow, And a glory tracks all ploughmen, because he once held the plough.

How his heart's strong pulse would quicken as he heard the shouts of Fame!

At last the gates were opened,—he might make his country's name

Prized in every noble's palace, shine on every cottage wall;
This should be his darling mission, he would give Old Scotland all;
As her greatness grew or dwindled, should his glory rise or fall.
That he did this great work nobly, you emigrants may say,
As they turn their faces homeward, ere they bow their heads to pray.

With foot on Caledonia's peaks, where Bruce his flag unfurled, BURNS held up Freedom's statute-roll before a wondering world. Roused Liberty and Honour from their sleep on rocky beds, And left them throned in majesty, with haloes round their heads!

What theme could be too lofty for such a Bard to sing,
Who, from his humble shieling, could sway the mightiest king;
Utter words that made Ambition tremble at her coming fate,
Through all the rich environment and purple pomps of state,—
Could point her to dark cloud-wracks in which grizzly terrors lie,
Or the throne of Satan, empty, gleaming grimly from the sky?

For to this Peasant's soul came shapes no other mind might see, As his great, black eyes were broaden'd by a grand expectancy; And he has heard, in moods sublime, upon the "Banks o' Doon," The varied voice of worship blending in one chorus-tune; And in those hours no thunder peal could wake a transient fear, Uplifted by the consciousness that Deity was near. Yet, to prove that he was mortal, Burns came down from these

high dreams

To let his boundless energies run idly into themes

That were but weak and worthless, as though a terrible sea

Should lie asleep in mud-creeks when the wild storm-winds are

fraa

die.

It is not strange Earth's mightiest sons should have heaviest woes to bear,

For those who tread the sunniest paths find darkest shadows there;

And he whose lyre oft sang of joy, has sat oppress'd by glooms, As poor as a blind beggar that stumbles amid tombs, And cannot find, among them all, one little grassy heap, For his weary heart to rest on while his dark orbs try to weep. A-flush with youthful ardour, Burns could laugh away his fears, And see bright gleams of promise on the peaks of future years; But, ah! too soon the crimson lights faded off into the sky,

And Hope, like Israel's Leader, climb'd the darken'd steeps to

To the strains which Burns has left us, Love comes in trying hour,

And the wail of Grief is silenced by their soft and soothing power;

There we find Religion honoured, although hypocrites are told That they tune dread Sinai-threat'nings to the ring of rich men's gold,

Sending them all velvet-footed round the chairs of pamper'd pride,

To shoot their forkéd vengeance out upon Life's bleaker side. No wonder that such mockery by his burly laugh was riven, As the palsied hand of Mammon tried to lift the keys of heaven.

Shapes of beauty gather round us, as we murmur through his rhymes,

Tiny drops of fireside music mingle with cathedral chimes,—
Shadowy forms of Superstition, that obey no common law,
Filling childish eyes with terror, and manly breasts with awe;—
Mirthful faces gleam upon us, near to others wet with tears,
Youthful forms that ray out joy-gleams, jostle hearts oppress'd
with fears;

Every mood of man and nature in his pages finds a place,
Gliding in so strangely life-like, full of harmony and grace,
From the wildest cry of weariest souls through hateful prison
bars,

To the holiest hush of summer nights asleep among the stars!

We see the light of sunsets gleam through memories in his lines,
And hear the sighs of Sorrow, like stray winds among the pines,
And we catch the tender under-song of half-awaken'd birds,
And the daisy blooms immortally in his immortal words.

There are lines that a child might whisper in the sunlight where
he stands,

And thoughts that patriots murmur, as they sleep with closeclench'd hands! After softest tones of pity, rolling out into a psalm,

To glide into all aching hearts, and heal them like a balm,

Satire-shafts may fly out keenly, to strike down some ancient wrong,

Every truth a barbed arrow, as it whistles through his song.

Oh, Burns, at last the nations yield to thee thy just renown!

No Poet, in past ages, ever wore a richer crown

Than is lifted to thy head, this day, by a myriad outstretch'd hands,

Yea, arms reach out across broad seas to help our nearer lands;
Yet Scotland, thy own country, ringed by strangers as she stands,
And hearing bursts of loud acclaim from vale to topmost peak,
Still knows her own dear children, as of ROBERT BURNS they
speak,

For the pride that is within them flushes out upon the cheek.



XIX.

BY ROBERT LEIGHTON, AYR.

RECITED IN "BURNS' COTTAGE," 23tH JANUARY, 1859.

THE world is old! States, Empires, Kings, Have risen, ruled, and passed away; Yet David harps, and Homer sings, And he of Avon speaks to-day.

The living song will still abide;
And when our age is dust in urns,
The world, as now, will own with pride
Its life-long debt to Robert Burns.

His touch was universal birth;

He set his native streams to tune;

And every corner of the earth

Knows Nith and Lugar, Ayr and Doon.

His homes we seek, his haunts we trace, Wherever thought of him is found; We follow him from place to place, And all is consecrated ground. On things that disregarded lie

His look bequeathed a priceless dower;

The trodden daisy caught his eye,

And blossomed an immortal flower.

Love's tender throes with him became
A sweet religion; and he pour'd
Such floods of beauty round a name
That all men love whom he ador'd.

The patriot-hero's brows he bound
With wreaths eternal as the sun:
The lowly honest man he crown'd;
He made the king and beggar one.

For well he knew that Lord or King
Was but a word. With deeper scan
He made both peer and peasant sing
Their highest title still was—Man.

In "shooting folly as it flew,"

There never was a deadlier aim;

And even those his satire slew

Are joint-partakers of his fame.

He lashed the bigot: his the creed
Embracing all humanity;
A conscience clear in word and deed—
One Father, God; and brethren, we.

And if we blame the sparkling rhymes

That made the maddening cup sublime,

Think only of the alter'd times,

And give the censure to the time.

In humour, friendship, pity, worth—
In themes that change not with the day—
Broad nature, felt o'er all the earth—
His genius holds unmeasured sway.

Great Prince of Song! to mark thy fame,
O, for a moment of thy pen!
Twere needless pains—thy living name
Is written on the hearts of men.

Our gilt makes not thy gold more bright;

But hearts enriched would yield returns;

A world of homage meets to-night,

And every thought breathes "ROBERT BURNS."



3. Muy for Burns.

BY EMILY ENGLISH, SYDENHAM PARSONAGE.

ONE OF THOSE HIGHLY COMMENDED BY THE JUDGES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

I.

Veil, veil, the warlike trophy,
Put shield and spear away,
Nor let the clanging armour
Wake echoes here to-day;
But bring the flail and corn-sheaf,
The scythe and ploughshare bring,
And hither call the minstrel
To touch the golden string.
Twine, twine the bay and holly,
A poet's garland twine;
For Robert Burns to-day returns,
And bids you deck his shrine.

II.

Since, to the cottar's homestead,
Wee "Rob the Rhymer" came,
A hundred times Auld Reckie
Hath lit the yule log's flame;

A hundred years have finished
Their journey round the sun;
A hundred snow-white mantles
For earth hath Winter spun;
A hundred times our father,
He of the noiseless hands,
His scythe hath whet, his glass hath set—
The glass with ceaseless sands.

Ш.

Years have gone by a hundred,
Since stars looked down on earth,
And noted in their calendar,
The Ayrshire ploughman's birth;
They stayed their mystic wanderings
In heavenly courts afar,
To hail the new-born comet,
To hail the Scottish star;
And marked the night-gloom round it,
The driving angry storm,
The misty cloud, like sad pale shroud,
Enfolding angel form.

IV.

Clad in a robe, whose whiteness

No earth stain had defiled,
The year in vesture innocent

Was dressed to greet the child:
The year so young and tender,

Scarce twenty-five days old,
An infant on the lap of time,
Its future all untold.
The songs of birds were silent,
Asleep were flowers and leaves,
And ranged were icy sentinels
In ranks along the eaves.
Ah! who could read December
In January's page!
Or trace the joys and sorrows
That wait a riper age!
Sleep on, unconscious infancy!
Sleep on, O curtained year!
Hush, wintry moan; hush, wailing tone;
The future is not here.

V

Let poets, taught by school-men,
Waste midnight oil till morn,
He needs small help from letters
Who is a poet born.
Burns walked abroad with Nature,
She showed the boy her store;
And while he read her page outspread,
He learned a poet's lore.

VI.

The thrush sweet numbers taught him:
The melody of brooks,

The harmonies of earth and heaven—
These were the Poet's books.
He heard the daisy whisper
A sermon from the sod,
And dreamed a dream beside his team
Of Nature and of God.

VII

His manhood had its frailties— The vices of the age-The dust that dimmed the diamond, The blot that blurred the page. But ye, so keen in judgment, Go, judge yourselves alone, Nor dare begin, till free from sin, To cast at Burns a stone. A hundred years are veiling The sins that tried him sore; A hundred years may cover His human sorrows o'er; But not a hundred hundred May quench the Poet's light, Nor hide the beam whose magic gleam Can pierce the deepest night.

VIII.

Come forth, thou "tentie seedsman,"
Thy robe about thee wind;
Upon thy stalwart shoulders
The "sower's corn sheet" bind.

Sow on, thou mighty sower,
Spread wide thy master hand;
Sow north and south, sow east and west,
Sow all the furrow'd land;
Sow on, in every season,
Beneath the golden noon;
And when the "lark 'tween light and dark,"
Doth chide the lingering moon.

IX.

When Scotland's children wander Estranged in foreign climes, A father's tone shall reach them In thy remembered rhymes: And rustic words familiar Their fainting hearts shall cheer, Like music in the distance Which dying children hear. The forest depths shall know thee, Where pines their shadows fling, And through the tangled mazes The axe's echoes ring; For while the log-house rises, And souls are sick with toil, Thy "Cottar's night," and "hearth-stane bright," Shall bless the "weekly moil."

X.

The breezes to the ocean
Shall sing thy songs of love,

While in the shrouds the sailor sits
To watch the stars above.

He hears his "Mary's" whisper soft,
Beyond the sea-bird's cry,
And vows to "love his somebody"
Till "a' the seas gang dry."

About the creaking rigging
The wintry wind pipes strong;
But he is in the "barley rigs,"
The yellow corn among;
And fancies that the northern blast
Is "westlin' saft 'mang trees,"
A balmy gale that o'er the dale
"Brings hame the laden bees."

XI.

Come forth, thou mighty sower,
Come to the tented field—
A David in the battle
To make a giant yield—
Sebastopol and Alma
To thee their tribute bring,
For words to music wedded
By memory's golden ring;
For words which shall in history
With brightest lustre shine;
For "Scots wha hae wi" Wallace bled,"
And cherished "Auld langsyne."
When bristling Balaklava
And gallant Inkermann

Re-echoed to thy Highland strains,
Hot blood like wildfire ran;
Until the struggle of the Bruce,
The fight a hero fights,
Was fought again upon the plain,
And fought upon the heights.

XII.

And when the Eastern furies Awoke while rulers slept; When Rachel for her children In shuddering silence wept; And long on Lucknow's threshold Pale famine's shadow fell, And mocked the thirsty sleeper With dream of dropping well; Then did the "Campbell's coming" Refresh the souls of men, Like some sweet smile of childhood, In heathery Highland glen; And on that day the Scottish lay Was like an angel's hand, That touched and broke the prisoner's yoke, And gave him strength to stand.

XIII.

Sow on, thou patient sower,
Sow, even in thy sleep,
And teach thy sons a lesson,
While they thy harvests reap:

To look beyond the present,

Nor seek to-day's renown,

Content if shining future

Shall reach them out a crown,

Content if, like the Phœnix,

A hundred years they lie;

Then mount the pyre, and fan the fire,

And soar beyond the sky.

XIV.

Hail to thee, Scotland's minstrel! Hail to thee, happy morn! Which saw the Bard of Nature, The sweetest songster, born. Nor say he dies, the Poet; He lives in noble deeds, In storm, in flood, and tempest, And in the soft green meads: And long as "toddlin' wee things" Shall climb the father's knee, So long as "wee bit ingle" Shall "blink sae bonnilie;" So long as oft-told "tender tale" Be breathed by loving pair, So long shall live the memory Of ROBERT BURNS of Ayr.

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XXI.

The Bard of the Poor.

BY ROBERT WILSON, ENNISKILLEN.

HIGHLY COMMENDED AT THE BELFAST COMPETITION.

FILL high to the conqueror's name,

He hath triumphed o'er narrow-souled wrong,
Till he stands on the ever-bright summit of fame,

The low-born monarch of song.

Praise the sweet "Voice of Coila" aloud,

And forget the dark shame of the past,
That he, of whom nations are proud to be proud,

Got the grave of a gauger at last!

Then send round the cup to the name of the dead,
And forget how the living was furnished with bread!

In his day how patronage ran
'Mong the high-born, wealthy, and wise;
God made him an orator, poet, and MAN—
They made him a hound of Excise!

'Tis past; and, at Fashion's command,

The soft tide of flattery turns,

Till the highest and haughtiest heads in the land

Are bowed to the genius of Burns.

Then, his dust to the dust; and his soul to its rest;

But his mem'ry to those who can cherish it best!

The nem'ry of Burns, it is ours—
The people's—for he was our own;
The flash of his spirit, the sweep of his powers,
Went forth for the people alone.
He sang of our hopes and our fears;
He pictured our sorrows and wrongs;
The love of our hearts and the salt of our tears
Were the rich reaming cream of his songs.
And we claim, as our right and our pride evermore,
The mem'ry of Burns, the Bard of the Poor.

To countries unknown when he died,

The people have carried his fame;
The far Yarra Yarra and Oregon's tide,

Like the Doon or the Ayr, know his name.
In the lands where the hot brow is fanned

By the spice-laden wing of the breeze,
On the bison-swept plains of the Western land,

In the isles of the summery seas,—
The people exult in the Doon's noble swan,
The high-hearted, out-spoken champion of Man:



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CENTENARY POEMS.

And ours be the task to proclaim

And cherish his name to the end;

Our love shall with jealousy watch o'er the fame

Of our poet—our brother—our friend.

In the midst of our cares and our pains,

When the soul is with troubles o'ercast,

In the holy of holies within us, remains

A green little spot to the last;

And there, in soul sunshine, shall bloom evermore

The mem'ry of Burns, the BARD OF THE POOR.



XXII.

BY ROBERT STORY, LONDON.

RECITED AT THE CENTENARY FESTIVAL AT ALLOWAY.

I.

WHAT moves fair Scotland? Tell me why Her realm of old renown Hears everywhere one festive cry In country and in town? What stirs her peasantry, that they The long procession crowd? And what hath mixed with their array The high-born and the proud? Wherefore hath Science poured her sons To swell and grace the throng? And Poesy her noblest ones That charm the land with song? Tell me what cause together brings A Nation's wealth and worth? Commemorate they the birth of Kings? No, no!—a Peasant's birth!

II.

A Peasant! born to teach the great, That, honoured as they are, There may be found in low estate Men their superiors far; And that while Royalty transmutes Liegemen to lords at will, NATURE selects and institutes A peerage grander still! To teach the patient sons of toil That they have that within Which make the tillers of the soil, And all above them, kin; That they are born with rights to scan, And, if need be, to save; That each, the least, is still a man Whom none dare make a slave; That though the accident of birth A different rank hath given, They have with them a common Earth, With them, a common Heaven!-High teachings! and exemplified On many a Scottish sward, Where rich and poor, with equal pride, Applaud their Peasant-Bard!

111.

Not mournfully, as if his death Were still a recent woe,

We mingle where he first drew breath A hundred years ago; Not mournfully, but joyfully, Exultingly, we meet-Above our heads his "lift sae hie," His land beneath our feet! Ay, his! for time, whate'er beside Its ravage overturns, Will leave this land its name of pride, "The land of ROBERT BURNS!" His! for your Bard was not of those Bright meteors, brief as bright; The Light that then in Ayrshire rose Is an undying Light! 'Tis burning, shining, shedding still, Where'er its beam extends, A brighter tint on vale and hill Than fairest sunshine lends! His! for the King of Scottish Song His banner here unfurled, And round it now, as subjects, throng The men that move the world!

IV.

O enviable Triumph! Nor

To Scotland now confined;
The Peasant-Bard, your own no more,
Belongs to all mankind!

CENTENARY PORMS.

Veiled in the tongue which many a strain To every Scot endears, But which, till Burns began his reign, Was strange to Southern ears-Veiled in the language of the North, His genius burst its shroud, Like sunshine from the cloud went forth-The brighter for the cloud! And now his words-each word a ray-O'er earth their splendours dart, But win their first and easiest way To England's sister heart! His love of right, his hate of wrong, His quenchless freedom-thirst, Which made this bard of burning song Of Freedom's bards the First; His lays on woman fair and pure, Our best gift from above, Which ever will his rank insure, First of the bards of Love; Find there congenial feelings rife That burn and bind till death, Where Love is held the soul of life, And Liberty the breath!

v.

I pass his woes. The Muse's gold
Is ever tried by fire;
In suffering she is wont to mould
Her Masters of the lyre.

Who would not brook them all, could he
Secure the fruit they bore?
His country's love from sea to sea,
And fame for evermore!
I leave his faults. To dwell on them
Good men will little reck:
The brighter that we find the gem,
The darker seems the speck.
And thousands pass, unblamed, from sight,
Far deeplier stained than he,
Whose genius yields, itself, the light
By which the stains we see!

VI.

Nor will I seek, presumptuously, The curtain to withdraw Which covers that ETERNITY No mortal ever saw. But I, for one, will ne'er believe That his great heart, which, here, *Was formed to grieve with those that grieve, And longed to dry each tear!-Which loved the true, the pure, the good, In cottage or in hall, And sang, in many a glorious mood, The loves and joys of all!-Which hated all things bad and base, All fraud and falsehood spurned, And 'gainst th' oppressors of his race Its keenest arrows turned!-

CENTENARY PORMS.

Which warmly felt, and widely poured
The freeman's, patriot's flame.
Till Scotland grew a "household word"
Extensive as his fame!—
I never will believe that—beat
That Great Heart where it may—
It beats in aught but bliss complete.
In God's eternal day!

VII

O pause! We know not what new powers Departed spirits gain, Nor whether with this world of ours Their sympathies remain. But if remembrance do survive The severance from the clay; If feelings, ruling when alive, Retain their wonted sway; If souls have consciousness on high Of things that here take place, And, with invigorated eye, Can dart their glance through space;--Who knows! OUR POET now may bend His eye on scenes like this, And Scoria's gathered homage lend A heart-swell e'en in bliss!

XXIII.

BY SYDNEY HODGES, LONDON.

ONE OF THOSE HIGHLY COMMENDED BY THE JUDGES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

A GOLDEN rhyme for Robert Burns—
A hundred years ago,
Dark dawned his wintry natal morn,
Shrouded in wintry snow.
But now beneath this crystal vault
The clear-toned tongue of Fame
Speaks to ten thousand gathered round
In homage to his name.

I would to God my words could flow
With such a power divine,
That I might call earth's farthest ends
To worship at his shrine:
That every human soul this day
Might breathe his name in love;
Think only of his fame, and leave
His faults to One above.

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CENTENARY POEMS.

O foremost Poet of the poor,
What dreams of beauty rise,
Whene'er we pause to speak your name,
Or see with your clear eyes!
By cottage porch, by ingle nook,
In crowded city ways,
Your songs are sweet chimes in our ears,
To cheer us all our days.

We cannot shut the sunshine out
That fills our hearts this day;
This day that wreaths your crown of old
With greener leaves of bay;
But yet the storms that shook your life,
The darkness of your birth,
Will somewhat sadden all our hearts,
And mingle tears with mirth.

We love you chiefly that your songs
Were wrung from healthful toil—
We see the shining plough, we scent
The fragrance of the soil.
Not in the lap of Luxury
To you 'twas given to speak,
But where the buffet of the breeze
Crimsoned your hardy cheek.

Your feet were early on the braes,
The breezy braes of Ayr:
You heard the skylark in the blue,
Forgetting all your care:

You mourned the fainting daisy-flower, Upturned upon the sod, And wreathed it in immortal rhyme, With accents lent by God.

You looked from out your low estate
With clearer eyes than ours;
You read great Nature's book aright;
You culled her rarest flowers,
You tracked with fatal, deadly feet
The perjured haunts of Pride,
To prove that men are "brethren a',"
No matter what beside.

O thousands listening here to-day,
Think how with heart elate,
Soared up his giant mind above
The brand of low estate,
And witness what a princely pen
A plough-roughed hand can guide—
To dissipate distinctions false,
And dash the brand aside.

O purest fame—too long denied,
The fame of lowliest men—
When came your champion, Robert Burns,
Who dared deny it then?
Full armed, in shining Truth he came,
Girt with the sword of Song,
With nervous arm to help the right,
And battle with the wrong.

God's gift of inspiration falls,
As falls the summer shower,
Blessing alike the monarch oak,
And humblest woodland flower.
No nice distinctions come from Heaven
Like those that come from men;
He taught us this, we feel it now,
And shall not err again.

O Mary, dwelling high in heaven,
To whom on earth he sung
To such sweet strains, the while his soul
With darkest grief was wrung!
Lives he beside you there above,
In bliss divine for aye,
And looking down, do both behold
His crown of fame this day?

A silent awe comes o'er my soul,
My bosom beats with fear,
To think perhaps the Dead himself
Stands listening to me here.
To think perhaps his holy eyes,
Filled with the rays of heaven,
Are looking calm reproof on me
For words too lightly given.

Unworthy fear! he sees my heart,

He knows my words are love—

A love that like sweet incense floats

To his far home above.



CENTENARY POEMS.

O thousands, listening round me here,
O millions, far away,
Send up a thought for ROBERT BURNS,
To crown his natal day!

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XXIV.

BY JAMES LAW, GRAHAMSTON, FALKIRK.

BUILD we his sepulchre, deck it with flowers, Fate of his kinsmen, this prophet of ours; Living neglected, and lauded when gone, Pile we the cairn for him, raise the gray stone.

Tell what we owe
As the centuries flow—
Tell in delight
Of his magic and might.

How he scatter'd his beauties with spendthrift profusion, Flinging his flowers like the spray of the ocean, Loving his country, and singing her praises, Her mountains, her moorlands, her thistles and daisies—Embalming for ever her weird superstition, Scathing the false in immortal derision.

Now is his fame Winging on flame; World wide his story, Radiant in glory.

He passed like a gleam in a whirlwind of singing,
To the gush of his music our echoes are ringing;
And they'll ring while sweet Spring with her daisies returns,
And so long proud and tearful we'll sing of our Burns.



XXV.

Br W. R. NEALE, INSTOW, DEVON.

ONE OF THOSE HIGHLY COMMENDED BY THE JUDGES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

"Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire
At plough or cart,
My Muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart."—Burns.

CLIME of rude hills and glens and moorlands bare,
Of heath-clad summits and of valleys fair,
Of winding river and o'erhanging wood,
Where frowns the forest and where foams the flood;
Stern Caledonia! thine a gifted throng
Of sons renowned in arms and skilled in song;
Whether by Lucknow's walls they conquering sweep,
Or cleave with reckless prow the Arctic deep;
Whether their breath the border slogan fills,
Or shepherd's pipe by Ettrick's sparkling rills,
Or court the Muse, or fearless tempt the gale,
Where busy commerce spreads the frequent sail;
Thy fame they bear alike o'er sea and shore,
From Ganges' marge to frozen Labrador!

And thou! sweet Poet of this mountain land, Who touched her wild harp with the master's hand, When Genius called thee from the peasant's toil, To sing the glories of thy native soil; She marked thy glowing spirit heaven-ward stray, Thy passions' strength, thy "pulses' maddening play," And bade thee paint, with truth-directed pen, Old Scotland's scenes, her manners, and her men, While verse divine thy weary task beguiled, Chief of the northern Bards! fair Nature's self-taught child! Nurtured in tempests was thy humble birth, As Spring unfolds to deck reviving earth; When she through chill surrounding snows puts forth, Some hardy offspring of the ice-clad north, Some mountain flower fast rooted in the rock, Proof to the storm king's wrath and whirlwind's shock; Like thee unmoved, midst howling blasts to grow, Gathering fresh strength from all the winds that blow. 'Twas thine to roam in boyhood's marvelling hour, By lonely dell, or grove, or haunted tower, Or oft, by Fancy, led through meadows fair, Where fragrant birks o'erspread the banks of Ayr; While from the rosy depth of summer sky. Fell on thine ear the wild bird's melody, The lavrock's carol to the brightening morn, The plover's cry o'er distant moorland borne; Or, from the breezy slope of upland height, While the sad gloaming led the tranquil night, To mark the everlasting lights return, Orion glisten, or Arcturus burn, Voiceless to sordid worldlings, but to thee Revealing in their silent mystery,

Such harmonies as through Creation rang, When all the sons of heaven together sang, As the young planets and the sister stars, Rolled through the universe their golden cars. Or stretched by Lugar's stream or Irvine's side, Or midst green shades to watch soft Logan glide, And wrapt at meditation's pensive hour, To yield the soul to thought's creative power, Lulled by the distant and the dreamy fall Of waters, mingling with the cushat's call; Or when the gust, on melancholy eves, Strewed thick and fast the sere autumnal leaves, Or ruthless winter stripped the quivering tree, And swept o'er frost-bound hills of Ochiltree, Thy spirit walked with Nature, free to trace Each varying form of grandeur and of grace, And in her wide and universal book, By hoary mount, or glen, or wandering brook, To read all things sublime and good and fair, And drink the fount of Inspiration there! Nor there alone thy dawning muse had birth, But in that home of unassuming worth, Where round "the wee bit ingle's" flickering light, Love's sunshine cheered the long December's night, Where dwelt, oft bred on Scotia's rugged soil, The dignity of independent toil; -where the sterner virtues held control, Did free-born thoughts possess thine ardent soul, Found not where pensioned flattery crawling, brings Obsequious homage to the thrones of kings.

Or charm'd by ballad old of minstrel grey. That told of belted knight or border fray; How leal Montrose, the headsman's axe defied, To quench in blood the patriot's fiery pride; Or how with Highland chivalry arrayed, Lochiel, the gentle, bared the clansman's blade, When Lowland steel laid chief and vassal low. With brow erect, and face toward the foe. And thy young breast with kindling ardour burned, To hear how trampled man indignant turned, As on the tyrant's crest avenging fell The sword of Wallace, and the shaft of Tell: Then did thy fervent heart o'erburdened long. Break forth in all the eloquence of song-Thine was each measure, sad, or grave, or gay, The soldier's war-cry, or the lover's lay, Weaving one exquisite mysterious chain, That links each absent Scot by mount and main, And brings a shadowy band to mem'ry's shrine, The dreams of youth, and days of "auld lang syne." When far from Yarrow and the braes of Doon, The exile hears each well-remembered tune, His native hills and skies before him gleam, The wood, the rock, the vale, the rushing stream. And spell-bound by that soft enchanting strain, He joyous treads Ben Lomond's heath again.

Come from the city and the court—vain throng: And roam the sunny woodland depths among. And breathe the balm of unpolluted air, And hear the Poet's solemn teachings there; How throbs his heart with bliss unfelt by you, As worshipping the Beautiful and True, Apostle-like, in temples great he stands, At altars pure, raised not by mortal hands! And he is named Deliverer in the skies, On earth a guardian angel in disguise, Cheering the languid soul thro' paths of woe, Though he must wear the crown of thorns below. Spurn not his task! he speaks of that glad time, Foretold by seers and prophet bards sublime, When Freedom, armed with thunders loud and deep, Shall rouse the prostrate nations from their sleep, While at the muster of his war array, Oppression's thrones shall crumble into clay. Then shall the desert blossom as the rose, Then shall be dried the fount of human woes, While radiant truth, descending earthward, brings Love by his side, and healing in his wings, Peace to the troubled shores of lands distrest, Joy to the sad, and to the weary, ---- rest.

Say scornful world! where Dives fares in state,
While Lazarus starves and shivers at the gate,
Where Wealth, unheeding Penury's faint cry,
Rolls in his gilded chariot proudly by,
Where Mammon turns humanity to gold,
And youth grows grey, and famished childhood old;

Say! does the Poet lift his torch in vain, Who clears the shadows from these tracks of pain, Who draws from slumbers deep, at song's control, Each finer impulse of the charmed soul, Or bids soft Charity her solace bear, Where threadbare merit lingers in despair. Pointing, to pallid Want's expiring eye, That better land beyond this darkened sky? Or calls the brave when man oppresses man, Fearless for Liberty to lead the van, And wakes those mighty spirits which of yore At Bannockburn her flag defiant bore, As rose from rank to rank the thrilling cry. Forward, ye Scots! the word is do or die? No! though obscure his lot who breathes the strain, Too wise for folly and her flaunting train, Whose notes inspired, toil's darkening hours beguile, Bidding forsaken grief look up and smile, And hail amidst the storm that flashes by, Mun's heritage of Immortality. Though his the broken heart and early doom, Lit by the lamp of genius to the tomb, Where flattery carves not on the sculptured stone, A pompous list of virtues ne'er his own, Yet, if his voice has stirred one holy thought In breast o'erladen, and in brain o'erwrought, Or nerved one wavering mind with steadier might, Who in life's battle struggles for the right, Or taught one soul by chastening anguish riven, To leave the issue and event to Heaven,

For him no marble honours need we raise, His monument shall be a People's praise, At every hearth, in every household known, His thoughts shall be familiar mottoes grown, A wealth of words with wit and wisdom rife, The common phrases of their daily life; And pilgrim feet from many lands shall tread The turf which blooms in verdure o'er his head, And tears from manhood's eyes shall fall unseen, To keep his grave and his remembrance green. Greater than mightiest conquerors, who wield The fate of worlds on Slaughter's crimson field, Is he, divinely taught, who thus subdues All mortal passions by his gentle muse, Winning, 'midst ceaseless cares, the grand renown, The Poet's triumph and the Martyr's crown.

Immortal Burns! such destiny was thine,
Onward, unquailing in thy work divine,
Thick closing round o'erwhelming troubles throng,
Yet to the last thy heart was full of song,
From the first cloud that o'er Life's morning rose,
In thy great mission, faithful to the close.
We, through the mist of long-departed years,
Behold thee crushed by dark foreboding fears,
Asking of unborn days, as Fame's reward,
Love for the Man, and honour for the Bard.
Have then thy wish! here in a kindred land,
Where Freedom dauntless guards the wave-washed strand,



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· EXTENALT POEMS

Where Science gives beneath this crystal dome. The Arts a shelter, and the Muse a home. We dedicate to these this festal day.

This nation's gathering, and this minstrel's lay. And in that boild and Angle-Saxon tongue. By Shakespeare warlied and by Milton sung. We raise the mingled shout of loud acclaim. And blend with theirs, immortally, thy name—High priests of Poesy, whose strains sublime Outlive the ruins and the wrecks of Time!

XXVI.

Musings

ON THE NIGHT OF 25TH JANUARY, 1859.

BY JOHN SHAW, PAISLEY.

BARD OF SCOTLAND! can thy vision Pierce the wide extent of space, And survey, from heights elysian, Earth, thy former dwelling-place?

Canst thou mark thy native country— See her children far and wide; Gathering now thy name to honour, Poet of the nation's pride?

Dost thou see the reverent homage—
Hearest thou the loud acclaim
Which, from all these gathered thousands,
Greets the mention of thy name?

All such questionings may be foolish, But I would believe to-night, That thine eyes behold things earthly, And take pleasure in the sight; That amid thy high communings

With the great departed ones,—

Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, Milton,—

Thou rememberest Scotland's sons;

That thou knowest well thy country's Pride in thee, thy works and fame, All the honours heaped upon thee—
All the glory of thy name.

And, perhaps, thy spirit seeth

Not alone these gatherings proud;

Heareth not alone orations

Spoken to the applauding crowd.

But, it may be, thou beholdest
Lonely watchers such as I,
Who, in solitude and silence,
Now recall thy memory:

Think of thee, thy life, thy genius,
All thou wast and might'st have been—
All thy youth's bright hopes and labours—
All thy manhood's suffering keen.

All thy struggles, errors, triumphs—
All thy thoughts and words of power—
All thy fame's grand culmination
In this centenary hour.

Could I call thee for a season

From thy present dwelling-place;

And in spirit, and in meekness,

Commune with thee face to face!

I would seek to learn the secret,
Which preserved through weary days,
Through life's hardships, griefs, and trials,
Through its cold and selfish ways,

All thy soul's first bounding fulness, Youthful freshness, vigour, bloom; Gladdening all thy chequered journey, Shining through thy deepest gloom.

From my childhood have I wondered
O'er this sad world's wrongs and woes,
And through youth and manhood pondered
How to bring about their close.

But I feel my spirit sliding
From its wanderings after truth;
Selfish doubts and fears are hiding
From my eyes the dreams of youth.

Petty cares, and joys, and sorrows, Poverty's unconquered bar, Hold my soul in iron thraldom, And my onward progress mar. While I sit in musing sadness,
Comes the impulse as of yore—
Comes the glory and the gladness,
Youthful confidence and power.

Comes the vision bright and holy— Comes the purpose firm and high; Faith and hope, still fearing neither Life nor death, nor mortal eye.

But I fear to-morrow's coming,
With its narrow round of cares—
Fear man's hard and selfish scheming,
Creeping o'er me unawares.

Help me, thou great Bard of Nature!
Strengthen now my failing heart,
Lead my faltering footsteps onward,
Loftier aims and hopes impart.

In the name of thine own Scotland,
Of her sons thou once did'st love,
I appeal to thee this evening,
Send me succour from above.

But I know such prayers are useless; Turn I must to God alone, Bow my head in sad submission, Strive to say, "Thy will be done."



XXVII

BY ALSAGER HAY HILL, TRINITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

HAIL, generous hearts! that now from every side Bring the just tribute of a people's pride; While to the cause, twin-guardians of the place, Art linked with Nature lend a double grace. For not in crimson characters of War Is writ this great day in our Calendar; But in the tints of Peace, and gleams of Rest, Lives the fair name on Memory's thoughtful breast. O'er other moods let Alma's glory reign, And the wild clash of Balaclava's plain: They have their trophies, howsoever drear, In the rent banner and the shivered spear. But where of late our heart-raised records stood, To the brave worth of Britain's noblest blood, Now stands a fairer shrine, to gentler powers, Where Fancy's self may bind her brightest flowers; While with the lights of Love and young Desire Imagination feeds the altar-fire; That e'en the warrior-god with rising smile May rest his wearied limbs and pause awhile:-

For in a happier cause, we raise our shields,
Than ever fired the breast on battle-fields;
If with the sword of Thought, in lofty aim
We climb the well-girt citadel of Fame,
And on the soul's broad pinions, unconfined,
Range o'er the boundless empire of the mind;—
And foremost in the ranks of that choice host,
Of whom a thankful world may justly boast,
A century's laurels gleaming on his brow,
Stands Scotia's peasant-bard for homage now!—-

Immortal BURNS! on him no patron smiled, Nursed as he was by Nature's sternest child. But on the hills of Ayr and banks of Doon His free-born spirit found a nobler boon Than ever Wealth could give, or Fashion lend, From the full coffers of a flattering friend. For his was no mean hand for empty praise, Well-skilled in schools of art to weave his lays; Such as with glittering spells awhile may please The pampered palate of luxurious ease, Till with the short-lived pleasures of its kind Another play-thing lures the dainty mind. But in the freedom of poetic might, Above the chattering crowds he winged his flight, Where, with the "lion heart and eagle eye," Genius, alone, undazzled holds the sky, And there, in full-orbed panoply of Fame, He stood,—and nations wondered at his name.

For not by slow approach and weary ways, Did that clear spirit spread its growing rays, But in the dawn of life, and childhood's flower, Burst the meridian splendours of his power; E'en as some meteor of the troubled north, Fresh from the springs of light he issued forth, That the 'mazed world, as from a dream awoke, In the rich sunshine of his piercing stroke; For to the heart, his heart-drawn Wisdom sped, And baffled Envy bowed her angry head. Yet did he not forget, though glorious now, That he who swept the lyre had held the plough, And he who now drew worship as a god, Had in the ranks of labour crushed the clod, But with the generous pride true merit knows, He cast not off the ladder whence he rose, Untinged with self, amid a selfish throng, Humbly, yet well, he steered his course along. While, like the streamlets of his own dear land, Gushed the wild music at his soft command, Yet to no single gift he owed his reign, For Nature strikes an universal strain; But with keen weapons, best of every kind, Had Nature stored the armoury of his mind; And now with shafts of wit, and slings of scorn, Brave as on eagle's wing, his course was borne; Now soft as fire-fly dance in twilight grove, In fairy sports of Love his fancies rove; Now, for a country's right with flag unfurled, Devoted Wallace holds the listening world.

CENTENARY POEMS.

So played life's shifting shadows o'er his heart, Till shaped in numbers by the minstrel's art-And thus for ever shall his glories roll, In the full orbit of that lustrous soul, Yet hard would be our task, removed so far, To play the watcher on so grand a star; And rather would your minds, that hunger still, Bask in the light itself, and take their fill. And now with reverent heart and vision clear. We bend our wonder to a lower sphere; Where, reft of minstrel-robes and Fancy's grace, A fellow-mortal runs his simple race; And as our curious eyes his struggles scan, We lose the poet in the common man.— But can the crazy farm, in yonder dell, Be the rich temple where the Muses dwell; Or will Imagination hide her head, 'Neath the rude shelter of a mountain shed? Is this ill-fashioned chair, the inspired throne Whence issued strains that made all times their own? Can these mean emblems of debasing trade Blend with a lyre that scorns all earthly aid? Or will the bard, with freedom in his lay, Stoop to the bondage of official pay? Hence! let not Envy fling her shadows here, Or wanton mockery raise the cruel sneer-For in th' arena for this world's renown, The greater struggle brings the brighter crown. And surely he, without severest strife, Ne'er rose triumphant o'er the storms of life;

But, with resentless heart, and honest pride, He stood and battled with the rising tide: And oft in troublous times he wrestled sore With want and hunger at the cottage door. Yet on that humble roof that cynics slight, A father's blessing shed its hallowed light; And from the spirit of that gallant sire, Exultant sons have drawn heroic fire, Wherewith in after-time their deeds have shown That glory lives not in the lyre alone; And thankful ever must our country be, That such brave offspring climbed the poet's knee. Yet shall not zeal o'erstep Truth's open way, To mould an angel from an earthly clay. He too had faults! Alas for those bright powers That give the relish to life's social hours; Those summer lightnings of the genial soul, That flash and sparkle o'er the circling bowl; For in their very charms, however gay, Lurks the sweet poison for their own decay. E'en as the rose, that by its own fair form, With fatal beauty tempts the treacherous worm. And so he fell-strange martyrdom of wit-Quenched in the gorgeous pyre himself had lit. But in that moment of departing breath, Another life commenced that knows not death-Where, with like spirits, since the world began, He rules for ever in the heart of Man, And all a century's years that now are spent, Add but an atom to that monument,



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CENTENARY POEMS

Which in the generations yet to be.

Time, its great builder, shall rejoice to see;

While from her throne, the world-wide Memory turns

To strew her amaranths at the shrine of Burns:

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XXVIII.

Genius Bindicated.

BY P. GIVEN, BALLYMENA.

'Twas the angel that stands on the highest heaven,
And looks o'er our world abroad,
Who enters the names in his Book of Life,
Of those who are missioned by God—
Who are sent from on high to this world of ours,
To teach us to smile when the frown fiend lours.
To give us a glimpse of Elysium's bowers,
And work with a will for the wretch that cowers
'Neath the tyrant's unmerciful rod;
And he ciphered a name in that book of fame,
A name that the world would be happy to claim.

And who bore the name that the angel enrolled
In that volume where worth is shrined?
Some earth-god that tramped with an iron foot
O'er the necks of his weaker kind?—
No; the peasant that turned o'er the stubborn till,
Whose share was more sharp than the knives that kill,
At whose voice the dark demons of outrage and ill
In the march of their mischief stood sullen and still,
Go, read, 'tis his name you'll find;
The warrior can fight, and the warrior can smite,
But "blood" is a word which the angels won't write.

Brave spirit! their riches thou neededst them not,
Yet the rich in this world are strong;
And poverty wields an unsparing club,
And a knife that is sharp and long.
And, alas! poor Nature, the world won't own
That Genius can sit on a loftier throne
Than the Despot, who scoffs at the shriek and the groan—
Can circle her brow with a holier zone,
Than the proudest of Mammon's throng;
For seas won't determine, and oceans won't bound,
The realms that do homage when Genius is crowned.

Did they reck he would rest in the grave of earth
They secured by a columned stone?
Can ye fetter the winds on his native hills,
Or hush their restrainless tone?
No; his name shall be shouted by every gale,
When the frost clothes the earth in his wintry mail,
Be whispered in spring by the flowers so pale,
And be sung by the streams of each Scottish vale—
Nor by Scotland's streams alone;
But by every rill that to ocean returns,
In climes far away from the "Land of Burns."

And Time hath now counted his hundred years,
And change hath made many things dim;
And Fame hath been cheating her thousand dupes
Who would envy the boast of him;

CENTENARY POEMS.

Though they rule in this world of corruption and crime,
Though falsehood stalk forth from his poisonous slime,
Yet unchangeable Pate, from her throne sublime,
When the glories of warriors grim
Sleep in death with the ashes that rest in their urns,
Shall point with a shout to the name of "Burns."



ZIZZ

BY GEORGE JOHN CAYLEY, WYDALE, YORESHIBE.

ONE OF THOSE RIGHLY COMMENDED BY THE STORES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPRESSION.

THRICE manly BURNS!

Where Fame's abruptest crag-horns thrust on high

Cyclopean-browed.

Pierce the deep azure of o'er-arching sky.

And rake the drifting cloud:

A wondering and a loving nation yearns

With upward eye toward thine achievement proud-

Far-far aloft discerns.

Hazed in blue atmosphere.

The scarped heights sublime

Thy spirit could climb-

By giant grasp of conscious powers,

And dint of lordly will that knew not fear-

Marking thy marvellous way.

On scar brows sheer,

With random wreaths of rock-born flowers.

Heather and mountain ferns,

From jut and crevice wrung-

In breathing pauses strung-

In careless haste uphung

For ever and a day

Above the reach of time:

There needs no stamp to credit Nature's gold: Untarnished lustre still its title clears.

And what is greatly human grows not old:

A hundred years have rolled

Over thy birth;

An age, most big with movement manifold.

Studding the front of heaven with new-found spheres:

Scarring the earth

With graves of empires cold:

And mountain birth

Of swift subsiding anarchies. Behold,

High o'er the channels of the changeful years,

Ringeth thine inextinguishable mirth:

Fresh, as from central fires by age unchilled,

Gush the perennial fountains of thy tears:-

True genius best bears witness of its truth, By a divine eternity of youth.

Oh! born beneath a bright but frosty star.

On the dead level of a peasant's fate;

O'erfrowned by bulwark, battlement and bar,

Of slowly piled prestige—the pomp and state

Of mounded ages slow-

We know thee, great!

We view thee from afar,

Where, long ago,

Thy sudden stress of power

Upreared a vantage tower,

Swift overtopping all those ramparts low-

Strongholds of petty pride, and pygmy war On which thou could'st look down and smile to know The puny scope of Envy's sling-stone shower!

Let us not whining mourn

Thine adverse lot:

Nor cry,

"Oh hadst thou but been born

Of Fortune less forlorn,

What marvels hadst thou wrought!"

Viewing God's government with eye askance;

No bruised reed he breaks-

No human circumstance

Is left to sport of chance:

God rules each life he makes,

Its triumphs and its stains;

Each destiny he ordains;

Tempers all throbs and aches

Of mortal joys and pains,

With wisdom that o'ertakes

Its purpose. Mercy reigns.

Interpreter between the low and high!

Thou gav'st a voice most sweet

To the long smothered beat

Of a mute world-wide heartache. The pent sigh

Of the unlettered many in that sound

World utterance found.

Thou madest glow

With tingling wonder lordly ears refined,

Hymning equality in joy and woe—

Brotherhood in each thrill, and throb, and throe

Of thought and sense and spirit, to all mankind.

Brave heartener of the low

From thy vexed life we know,

However Fortune frown,

Her storm-clouds cannot blind

Eyes which God broadly opens in the mind

Of genius—nor her minions overthrow

And trample down

We are but feeble folk, Oh fellow-men!

Cast of incongruous stuff, and full of flaws:

Angels of light, and monsters of the den,

Alike claim kindred with us! All the laws

Of our existence, one huge tangle seem,

And inconsistency their code supreme;

Earth a dark riddle—life a wandering dream.

Planted deep in human clay,

The right divine to royal manhood's crown.

Seeds of good and evil spring—
Tangled root and tendril cling:
Grappling closer day by day
Root to root, and spray to spray,
Wax side by side
Flower and weed from kindred seed
With mingled growth;
Blossom and fruit of good and evil deed—

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Base and noble pride— Love with lust allied— Energy with greed— Humility and sloth.

Who hath his eye so single,
Life's riddle to unravel,
Where truth and error jingle—
Where show and substance mingle
Through all man's toil and travail?
The prophet lifts the veil from heavenly things.—
Of human truth the keen-eyed poet sings—
All flaunting tawdry tinsel-broidered skirts
Of vain pretence, with scorn aside he flings,
Trappings and gauds that cumber Nature's plan,
And, as some grand old sculpture Phidian,
In hero-stamp asserts
The naked athlete majesty of man.

Genius is manhood of a richer colour,
Of passion deeper, inspiration higher:
We all feel like emotions, only duller,
As ferment is a lower grade of fire.
Plain coal, or purest crystal-carbon jewel,
Strong flame must turn all mortal stuff to ashes:
Misfortune's keen blast, urges pregnant fuel;—
From dark brief stormy lives thus genius flashes.

No stronger strain of feebler wit can ape it— Vainly ambitious dullards patch and garble— Howe'er the patient plasterer grind and scrape it, Scagliola fain would be, but is not, marble.

And yet the rusty needle thrown aside,

(Whether it broke

Its point upon the beggar's ragged cloak,

Or emperor's ermined coronation robe)

Still needs must feel,

In conscious pride,

From head to heel,

Its own mute polar sympathies allied

To the vibrations of the fine-poised steel

That trembles to reveal

The deep magnetic secret of the globe.

Oh Burns! in strength and weakness still a type
Of Titan manhood—we, thy feebler kin,
View thee triumphant in the pinching gripe
Of penury; undazzled in the din
And blaze of sudden fame;
Though touched with sin,
As all men must be,—in thy troubled soul
Truth writhed untainted still. Thy praise and blame
Are medicine to our baser pride and shame.
A man of men, O Burns! thou didst depart,
Leaving thy great life on a nation's heart,
Never to fade or pine:

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Well might a sunset glow of glory fall
Around thy pall!

And now, long since thy tropic day is done;
A luminous pyramid, zodiacal
Of human worth, though starred with lights divine,
Noth mobby bear high witness that thy sun,
Shorn of its spots, elsewhere doth bravely shine!

~ 481816.

XXX.

BY JAMES HASTINGS, LIVERPOOL.

"Those men who to the world most good have brought,
Are men the oftenest called on to endure;
And till that world for which those men have thought
Thinks for itself, there will not be a cure."—JOHN FORSTER.

Honour the date of glories; honour the birth of him

Whose bright nobility of mind was all the rank he had;

Commemorate the greatness of his fame with festive hymn,

And let the heart of Britain be with one emotion glad!

In the lists of the departed, in the chronicles of those

Who concentrate the worship of the world for evermore,

He who now is Scotland's glory slumbers gently in repose,

Brighter far than chieftain's falchion, or the burnished lance
of yore.

Not interred with his body was the good he nobly did—
It lived to sink what evil he had ever said or sung
To a darkness deep as that one underneath his coffin lid,
While with praises of his virtues every forward nation rung.
Men of mind must strive and suffer, live a life of want and gloom;

Tis the penalty of intellect, a weight on Fancy's wings.

They must look into the future, far, far beyond the tomb,

For the chaplet that awaits them for their rank above the kings.

No classic shade of college rote, no masters famed in lore.

Imbued the Scottish Bard with love for all that was sublime:
He gazed on Nature's loveliness as none had gazed before.
And sang of it with majesty that startled every clime.
The azure arc of heaven, with its stars so brightly pallid.
The stillness of the morning, and the pensive tone it yields;
Or the trembling brakes and sedges with which the streamlet dallied.

Were the only tomes he studied in his college of the fields. And the smallest things within them, as he trod behind his plough,

Were chanted forth in accents so entrancing to the world.

That charms then undeveloped are beloved and cherished now,

Since ROBERT BURNS the banner of their witcheries unfurled.

He read the book of nature, the "manuscript of God,"

To every car in Christendom; dilated every eye;

Then laid him down to slumber underneath the simple sod,

And let the world discover such a poet cannot die!

Did ever sire leave after him an heirloom half so great,
Since he who sang of Paradise—that bard of darkened eye?
Twas through their souls they looked upon the beauties that

And left immortal music as their priceless legacy.

Immortal through all centuries, for such minstrelsy as theirs

May not be far exceeded in that consecrated sphere

Where the songs of all the ages, the divinely-fashioned airs,

Are tuned on holy timbrels by the hands that wrote them

here!

To study man and love him where the ancient mould was found

Unbroken by its contact with the influences of earth—
To raise the man by manliness, and not by title's sound,
Did Scotland's Bard accomplish in his songs of grief and
mirth;

For man to him was God-like; mere hereditary rank
Was but an empty mockery if the soul was wrongly placed;
The spurs of such a chivalry had folly in their clank,
And the revenue that fed them was a melancholy waste.

His land is held as famous for its men of mighty brain; A Ramsay had unravelled much of Nature's lofty page, But the foremost man among them in the glory of his reign, Was ROBERT BURNS, the Titan 'mid the poets of his age. To-day a common ploughman, to-morrow raised on high, To be perpetual monarch of his country's realm of song; No usurpation daring, provoking clamour's cry, But one acclaim of glad assent from each admiring throng. Upon his throne he ceased not with unflinching soul to teach The masses to look upward with a bold enduring face: He told them of a dignity that hung within their reach, And bade them hurry onward, stimulated in the race. And though he erred (for all men err), he suffered not the vice To see the sun of noon-day, but with penitential dirge Dejected, bowed, and humbly sought the God of Paradise, To wash out the transgression, and save him from its scourge.

The hearts that sorrow cankered leapt impulsively with joy.

At the lofty exhortations that their fellow-worker breathed;
They read and learnt with ecstacy, that with the world's alloy
A metal worth the winning was insidiously wreathed!

And the mourners for these benefits, that sweetened life again,
Were grateful to the giver, while the mirthful blessed him
too;

For wit but rarely equalled, and the higher stamp of men
Adoved him for his limning of the beautiful and true.

His thoughts, the brilliant flashes, mind-meteors grand and wild,

Illumined all the heavens of the literary zone:

There was solace for the aged, and pleasure for the child,
Reflection for the gayer ones, and comfort for the lone.

The ivied brows of ruins claimed a loftier respect,
Than mediæval whisperings of grandeurs that had died;
The poet gazed upon them,—they became his own elect,
With life once more their portion, immortality their pride:

A heartless world could pity him, could sigh to think that Fate

Had cast his lot (in worldly sense) so lowly and so harsh;
And from its throne of easiness stern lessons could dictate,
But stretch no hand of brotherhood to clutch him from the
marsh.

He sank in subtle quicksands, thousands seeing it as though (Like a matador conflicting in the gladiatorial fight)

His combating with penury should be an idle show,

To those who gloated fiendishly, exultant in the sight.

But none had soul to help him in these isles of Britain's power!

Not a drop, in this great ocean of uncomprehended wealth,

Was ever meted to him in the dark and misty hour Of maladies and suffering, or of evanescent health.

We pay the deeds of sinews, pay the warriors who have bled.

Too often leaving aidless those who fight with mind alone;

And when the Bard of Scotland asked his countrymen for bread.

They waited till he vanished, and then granted him a stone!

In Dante's love, too chequered far;—in Petrarch's constant breast;—

In Burns with sainted Mary,—may be read the poets' hearts;
They cannot unimpassioned gaze where holy virtues rest,
And vain would be the struggle to arrest the tear that starts,
Pearl-tears of adoration, that with sparkling lustre tell
How noble minds grow nobler, tender hearts more yielding

How—weak as is their nature—some unbroken chords impel
A strain of earnest rapture, where few earthly objects will.
But homage to face-beauty, as to higher charms of soul,
Was not less freely given: to be sharers of their throne,
Round which the tide of ages unmolestingly should roll—
They raised to queenly dignity the maids they deemed their

own!
Such wands of mental alchemy are nobler than the steel
Which bids the crouching parvenu arise a pseudo knight;
The names that bards ennoble with their more than royal seal,

Are meteors in our darkness, orbs of glory in our light!

Honour the date of glories: over our island's soil

Another such will never guide the slowly-wending plough:
Pray God the brow of genius may never ache with toil,
Like his whose natal period is consecrated now.

Let after-glories not be stained with early hunger's pang;
Let no such noble heart as his with agony be torn,
Or chaunt its griefs as when he tuned his slighted harp and sang,
That man, the noblest work of God, was made and doomed
to mourn

Spirits of those whose bodies lie in cerements of death,

May have the power of scanning earth, even from heavenly
spheres:

'Tis not too late—one spirit there may feel the grateful breath
Of our hearts' incense upward rise, and note our grateful tears.
Let us wipe out the sorrows (which as a pilgrim poet
He suffered here among us) with song, till the heaven rings
With the echo of honest hearts, that even the bard may know it,
High in the world of worlds, at the throne of the King of
kings!



XXXI.

By J. H. POWELL, BRIGHTON

TEN thousand zealots join the fête,
From Europe's distant bounds—
The toiling low, and wealthy great,
Where Art her pæan sounds.

They sing the glowing freedom-strains,
Of Scotland's Shakespeare, BURNS—
Swelling harmonious to the plains,
Where toil its wages earns.

The splendours of an Eastern Court,
The glory Genius owns—
By Sculpture's plastic fingers wrought,
Look down from marble thrones.

They honour Burns—the ploughman bard,
Whose life was heir to pain—
Who battled, suffer'd, struggled hard,
With body and with brain.

Who felt the scorn of scorning knaves—
Too noble to be turned—
Who sang aloud to laggard slaves.
For whom his spirit yearn'd.

They honour BURNS—the friend of truth,

Devoted to her cause—

Who died in prime of stalwart youth,

And bade injustice pause.

Whose poems, jewel-like, are set
In caskets wrought by fame—
Whose God-form'd genius, even yet,
Shall savage slander tame!

They honour BURNS—and win the cheers
Of millions scatter'd wide—
Who read his strains with mirth and tears,
And honest-hearted pride.

They honour Burns—yet honour worth,
In rustic raiment shown,
Diffusing wisdom o'er the earth,
And making virtue known.

They honour Burns—yet honour all
The poet-kings who gave
Their magic themes, at Freedom's call,
To clevate the brave.

Let rival vices hide in gloom

Their hideous aims from men,

The world, by stern command of doom,

Must bow beneath the pen.

The age of merit dawns at last,

To sway her potent rod,

Veiling the misdeeds of the past—

Uplifting souls to God.

No longer need the tyrant's tool
Usurp the throne of right—
Teaching mankind, in folly's school,
The old fierce rules of fight.

Since science, art, and love embrace,
And wisdom smiles serene—
As commerce wears upon her face,
The aspect of a queen.



XXX

Eir Parrimar. Patriot, and Boet.

3 · 3 ... TETENAT GIDLEY, Lordon.

•

Hera idmigia deuren e deigin embogg. Siamise se if (bid-Ase veredig). Swell in die jussire sir

Y or markal harps prepare.

Ye may be of Helione. With mighty voice

Ap II shakes the world:

His learner is unfurled

And now he folds the universe rejoice— With fold majestic hand he strikes the chords. And earth's remotest echoes catch his heavenly words.

Listen, while divinity
Proclaims throughout infinity
His sovereign will—
"Ye tuneful dead.
Awake, and tread
In robes of mist your old Aonian hill:
Again, with songs of praise,
Your death-like voices raise;

A brother bard earth's dull confinement spurns:

Let every hand

In spirit-land

Now grasp the hand of Burns."

Despise him not,

In that his lot

Was cast in lowly grade;

Riches give no right to fame,

Wealth alone can win no bays;

But honour and a stainless name

Are man's certificates for praise,

And these will never fade.

These Robin owned—these taught his muse

The lowlier walks of life to choose,

And tuned his lyre;

Unheeded then, yet, now that death

Has stopped his all-melodious breath, He sings a nobler theme, and seraphs pause to admire.

An oyster sleeps in the ocean's bed,

II.

'Mid thousands of his kindred bred,

Unseen, unsought, unknown;

One hundred years have passed away,

And a pearl that in that oyster lay,

Now decks a monarch's crown.

"'Tis thus great ends from small beginnings flow;"

There's nought on earth so slight, but it may yield

A lesson that a sage would gladly know,

Though haply in an oyster shell concealed-

Thus grows the accent to a lordly oak.

Thus from a single spark a thousand acres smoke.

See now the ready team.

The ploughshare's fitful gleam.

Which eatches Sol's bright beam.

And shoots it back:

Mark the sturdy ploughman's tread

Along the track

There lies a pearl within that head.

As lay the oyster in its bed:

To man, and even to himself unknown;

But time which, on its ceaseless wheels,

The mysteries of life reveals.

Will ope the clumsy shell, and gain the pearl renown.

Love, among the corn-flowers sighing. Breathed the song by Venus given;

Robin heard

The grateful word.

Then, fair Ceres' maid espying,

Soared on Rapture's wings to heaven.

Love the coldest heart can warm,

Love will Passion's frown disarm,

Rouse the soul from selfish dreams,

Thaw the ice on friendship's streams,

Give the dumb persuasive speech,

And the ear of deafness reach-

Love the poet's harp has strung

Which before all silent hung;

Many lays of tend'rest feeling, Pangs of love-sick hearts revealing, But for Love had ne'er been sung.

III.

To all the praise let Phœbus not aspire,
 A part may Venus claim;
He gave the elements of lyric fire.
 She fanned them into flame.
Then swelled with love the poet's heart,
 His voice that love would tell;
 His lips were fain,
 But speech in vain
 Essayed to break the spell;
Till Poesy her numbers lent,
Let loose the fettered tongue, and gave the passion vent.

His rustic muse next burned
A country life to praise;
The lowliest flower that grew
From him encomiums drew
And kindly lays.
The conflict 'twixt the "Brigs of Ayr" he sung,
And gave to each a spirit and a tongue;
And still o'er winding Nith the echoes float,
Whose slumbers first were waked by his melodious note.

From Love to Nature turned,

Again he changed his theme
From hill, and dale, and stream:
His country's wrongs
Engaged his songs,
And tuned his patriot lyre.
The faults and follies both of church and state
He saw, nor sought to hide;
Right, truth, and sense he strove to vindicate.
Both far and wide—
An honest man God's noblest work he deemed,
And Wisdom's tattered rags o'er Folly's robe esteemed.

IV.

Say, what the mighty spell
That could the world compel
To listen to an humble ploughman's lay?
Was it the lofty thoughts that shone
In reasons or comparison?
Was it the flowers of speech refined,
The blossoms on the tree of mind;
The apt lampoon, the piquant jest,
Mirth and her merry maidens drest
In metres gay?

These but in part:
'Tis not on art

That poets find their strongest claims depend;
'Tis when the reader's heart is warmed,
His mental sight and hearing charmed,
With songs by Nature penned—

This weapon could our skilful ploughman wield, And to the hearts alike of lord and clown appealed.

But disappointment came
And clipt the wings of Fame,
And chained the soaring eaglet to the earth;
The vulture of despair
Fed on his vitals there,
Till death his fetters broke, and Britain learned his worth.
Now silent hangs the harp he strung,
Now hushed the voice that often wrung
The kindly tear from many an eye,
Now dark in dismal cemet'ry.

V.

One hundred years! and bonnie Doon
Still murmurs on the selfsame tune
That soothed the slumbers of a new-born child:
One hundred years! that infant tongue
Has prattled, prayed, complained, and sung
Songs sweet and wild:
One hundred years! full sixty-three
That tongue, struck mute by Death's decree,
Has silent lain—yet bonnie Doon
Still murmurs on the selfsame tune.

Dead! 'tis a word that mortals frame, But 'tis a sound unknown to Fame,



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CENTENARY POEMS.

She owns no Stygian tide.

Her sons in the Pierian spring
Are vivitied—

Of her they learn on earth to sing.

Then upward soar on her celestial wing—
Another niche within her fane

A statue boasts:

For Scotia's rustic son
The race of life has run.
Apollo's bays are won.
And, mid the tuneful hosts.

That voice, whose echoes still through Ayrshire sigh, Now swells the everlasting anthem of the sky.

XXXIII.

BY ROBERT W. THOM, BIRKENHEAD.

They err who say the years roll on;
They err who say they die;
They rest immortal 'neath God's throne—
'Tis we who hurry by;
The worlds that will be, and that were,
Will find them, and have found them there.

For do not years, like stars, burn out
From what we name the past,
And do not men, in nations, shout
In the weird light they cast;
Knowing the glory and the flame,
Some grand old poet's deathless fame?

Oh, there be ages wrapt in night,
Where heroes reigned and fought,
Where love's lamp burned, as ever bright,
And sages starved and thought;
Upon their brows no crown of song
Reveals them 'mid the radiant throng.

CENTENARY POEMS.

But that old year of which we wot,
Will ever gleam afar;
To freeman, lover, bard—who not?
A bright peculiar star:
And all who suffer want or wrong,
Shall look on it and straight be strong.

Our sires,—they were a noble band!

Stout at the chase and bowl;

True to their word, and free of hand;

But, oh, the world of soul—

We would not wrong them, when we say

'Twas dark and narrow in their day.

Perhaps their statesmen were not knaves,
Their sovereign was divine—
It is enough that men were slaves
When dawned their Fifty-nine:
Is it enough, as wind or sea,
Our Fifty-nine beholds us free?

Oh, no! as one our spirits move,
Our shouts leap loud and long;
This day we hail the Bard we love,
Our Burns—the King of Song;
For why? the fire lit in his soul
Is freedom's star from pole to pole!

Go teach the slave to sing his lay,

Then chain him—he who can;

Tyrant! his spirit spurns thy sway:

Away—the thing's a man!

The chain and cloud alike are riven—

His soul is free, and bounds toward heaven!

All honour to the Bard, who, grand
In native minstrel might,
Taught, with the plough-hilt in his hand,
To thrones the rule of right,
Proclaiming all who bear life's load,
Brothers—no less—before our God.

Our sires in many a civil fray,
Wrote, free-born, in their gore,
Bold was their front on battle day,
But when the strife was o'er,—
We would not wrong them, when we say
They bow'd too low to gods of clay.

Burns sang, and oh, the change! when true
We honour rank, but now
We own a glory in the dew
Upon a peasant's brow—
In man, a rank unborn of birth;
A grandeur which is not of earth!

TITE AT PERM

To the service of least to the service of the servi

Firms I is shown the over wreather.

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the land of factors and emissions of The contract the training terms. The contract of section terminal sounds that There is established from National states of the contract o

Pare dendrope gent the plain.
White in the vale the hawthorn grows
Perennial in thy strain;
And ever where its boughs are flung.
Lave whispers in a purer tongue.

Oh, Love, until he woke his lyre,
No native voice had'st thou;
Lewd ditties mocked thy mild desire,
Or crimson'd thy chaste brow,
But from his manly soul did spring,
Strains thy pure lips can smile and sing.

Oh glorious Bard, with souls elate,
And vision touched by love,
We pierce the darkness of thy fate,
And see thee crowned above:—
For who around their brows have twined
Heaven's wreath, save those who love mankind?

Let bigots clasp an iron creed,

Let faith's fires zealots fan,—

He cannot love his God in deed

Who spurns his fellow-man:

Thy love encompassed, like a ring,

Man, from the peasant to the king.

All hail, immortal Bard, no more
Thy fate demands a tear—
Thou art not dead, but gone before:
'Twas dust that press'd the bier!
Thy soul is with us, and defies
Blank death:—the poet never dies!

Oh, while there breathes a race dare length.

Strong in the wrath of men.

The harvest of the wrong'd to resp.

On mountain or in glen.

Though it be with the price of breath.

Sped in worst form of patriot death:

Or, while there heats a heart has borne
A petty tyrant's yoke.
Feeling—one wild throb of its scorn
And the foul thing is broke!
Vet, awed by love of wife or child.
Has hanged the burning curse and smiled:

While breathes a man who, 'neath night's star,
Has mourned love's sweet tie riven;
Has strained his eyes where smiled afar
His Mary shrined in heaven—
Has breathed his soul through stars and night,
Where smiled her spirit shrined in light;

Yes! while these are, and in our sky
Star gleams and Sun returns,
Stout hearts shall shout with flashing eye,
All hail to Robert Burns!—
Shall shout till echo back returns
The peal of soul,—all hail to Burns!

CHARLES

XXXIV.

Pastoral.

BY A. E. G., LONDON.

In Mossgiel's lowly vale, unsought, unknown,
His father's fields a Scottish peasant tills.
Hungry the soil; the wild wind's fretful moan
Wails o'er the dreary moorland waste, nor chills
Alone the land,—its mournful echo thrills
That peasant's heart,—as following the team
He ponders o'er life's numerous varied ills,
Mocks at the hopes his poet-visions dream—
High hopes born but to swell Oblivion's sullen stream.

Repress'd by toil, by penury, by want,

His ardent spirit, panting to be free,
Back on herself recoils with madd'ning taunt,
And beats her wings in restless agony.

Fierce wishes struggle for the mastery,
When lo! the jarring chords in passion's frame
In sweet attune breathe softest melody,
Say, what can thus the soul's wild promptings tame?

He loves, and is beloved—what cares he now for fame!

}=1

Thesails - nount, or lymns + sparry give,

nount - gives or Benne - flowery value.

Vinte of nounce taken been the invitated space.

Views have - irse promptings might the heart small,

Alike all times all tops shall wait.

For have presente round the one sternal spring.

Els some bestime with amaranth the pale.

Els wrispers had the zonaye - langual wing.

Els the rote goalen up, which poets inding sing.

Assite his not unit mattack filly fung.

Front from the parring noise and day's tarmoid.
Actions the gien that peasant moves along.
And by his solo—what resks he then of soil!—
Lear Highland Many most of all his modi!—
It is given somethay winder through the shade.

Where the role hawthern's terrains branches coil.
And in functions stages a crutch the glade.

Will historiass for beneath with version moss oberfaild.

In listless case recline they on the grass.

Mind speaks to mind, and heart to heart is beating.

Long hours like seconds all unnoticed pass.—

The closing eye, the distant low and bleating

Of folded flocks, the silent shadows meeting

On the slant mountain's side, the silvery gleam

Of Cynthia's orb, all coy, her glance repeating

In the clear mirror of the quiet stream,

While dew drops scatter'd round, reflect day's parting beam.

Anew they vows exchange, they plight their troth
Beneath the starry witness of the sky.

The open Bible ratifies the oath.

Then water take they from the stream hard by,
And sprinkle it in air, to testify

Their thoughts are pure as is its limpid wave.

They part; why weep? the longed for hour is nigh
When they shall wed. The peasant's thoughts are brave,

Yet that moon's waning light shines o'er his Mary's grave.

She dies,—she lives his guardian angel, guide;
Her memory wakes the first tones of his lyre,
Her seraph promptings calm his hectic pride,
Fan with a gentle breath his poet-fire,
And all his noblest, sweetest strains inspire.
When fortune, fame, allure him from afar,
And raging passions in his breast conspire,—
Oft till the morn uplifts night's ebon bar,
He, heavenward gazing, marks one "lingering star,"

And fondly dreams that thus her steadfast love,

Like yon fair orb 'tween light and darkness stayed,

Still bends on earth her gaze from realms above,

Still wakes o'er him her "lover lowly laid."

Dear girl, though thy tomb moulder in the shade,

Undeck'd by epitaph and sculptured urns,—

Long as soft pity doth the heart pervade,

Long as true Genius her just homage earns,

Thy name shall live enshrined in the sweet verse of Burns.

The latter forms the worker Bard when Fame

I do not be the total the second when these saily years.

Value own at we uncompare with these

a country use this was as man by:

In the sail the was as man by:

In the sail the transfer that the least makens

The transfer a soil was a subject the second way.

The Post was not increase, earn nor sime:

He can be not true of a lame

To amost the policy of all time

To amost the policy of an infilling rese.

He can be not all the confilling rese.

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He can be not all the confilling rese.

The non-call the confilling rese not there.

But ever a run some near walk—way the first share.

Life's trials, you affection smiles, and tears.

Cheers the when sail when happy joys with thee.

And with how a work displies thy attrious fears.

All thou canst feel endure and suffer.—he

Hath feit, and felt with more intensity.

No; not the fabled harp of Æolus

Vibrating to the zephyr's softest sigh,

Was finer strung, or could his soul surpass,

Ho sensitive, so exquisitely tremulous.

Not with the tutored pen of classic lore,

Not with the laboured gloss the schoolmen praise,
Burns wrote. He little needed to explore

The musty tome to gild his thrilling lays;
Fresh from his heart they gushed. He knew each phase
Of human life, for he had lived them all,
And as he felt he sang. The wreathed bays
Might twine the minstrel's brow, but not enthral
Him at the Muse's shrine to keep high festival.

All themes are his. Hark! how he strikes the lyre

To hymn his country's might, his country's fame,
With all the patriot's love, the Poet's fire.

Rise, Wallace, rise.—hail the all-conquering Græme,—
The Bruce of Bannockburn, whose glorious name
Is Freedom's watchword! List till thy dull breast
Glows with a sparkle of the kindling flame,—
Till thou with soul resolved, and lance in rest,
Thy country's champion stand, to do her high behest.

Mirth wreathes the string,—what fun, what frolic there?
While Laughter shakes his sides with jollity,
Wit smoothes the wrinkles on the brow of Care,
And prompts the jest, and crowns the revelry;
The nappy ale, the tankard foaming high.
Or Satire's biting tongue, with mocking smile,
Tunes her harsh notes; or Terror's phantasic
With Superstition doth the wonder pile,
And with uncanny tales the lingering hours beguile.

CENTENARY POEMS.

But O what feeling all the chords express!

As Love breathes forth the soul-enraptured strain
With Sappho's passion, Petrarch's tenderness;
Or Disappointment wakes the sad refrain,
Or stricken hearts in hollow sighs complain;
Or sweeter far when in some lowly vale,
With native eloquence the labouring swain
Pours forth to his beloved the tender tale
"Beneath the milk-white thorn, that scents the evening gale."

Nor scorn the lay that tells of humbler joys,

The quiet cot, the peasant's modest hearth,

The calm content that poverty enjoys,

Blest in an honest heart and native worth.

Though carking Care may chill the rising mirth,

And Want with deadly torpor numb the soul,

Far happier than the seeming great of earth,

He tastes not of life's pleasure-poison'd bowl,

Nor feels the thousand griefs no riches can console.

Or when a holier theme inspires the muse,
How sweet the music of his solemn lays,
As Nature's works his tender fancy views,
Kindling the soul to gratitude and praise,—
While Faith his trembling, doubting fears allays,
Can finite with the Infinite compare?
Shall God, whose goodness the whole earth displays,
On soul-less atoms lavish thus His care,
And leave His servant man a prey to dark despair?

'Tis this that makes our spirit one with Burns,
His sympathy. Like us to labour born,
His feelings are our own, and our concerns
Are his. He suffer'd want, but with proud scorn
Disdain'd on rank and pamper'd wealth to fawn,
His the unfetter'd, independent mind,
(Sweet sings the bird her breast against a thorn;)
And who like him so nobly hath defined
How innate worth exalts the meanest of mankind?

Urge not his frailties; thou thyself art frail—
Nor with false kindness the long past constrain
To yield to Scandal's jest each trivial tale.
Time fans the chaff, but garners up the grain.
A noble heart shuns with a proud disdain,
All that depreciates what it fondly loves,
Washing from memory's tablet every stain
With sympathetic tears. The good approves
The good, and all the soul to generous impulse moves.

From Scotia's wilds to England's utmost verge,
To honour ROBERT BURNS all hearts combine.
Fraternal feeling doth the tribute urge,
And whispers softly round "for Auld Lang Syne."
Hand clasp'd in hand, the Scot and Southron join,
While rich and poor an equal interest claim,—
With one accord the votive garland twine,
With one consent revere his cherish'd name,
With one united voice exalt his deathless fame!

XXXV.

The Exile's Tribute.

BY LIEUT.-COL. GEORGE ANDERSON VETCH, HADDINGTON.

WHAT Bard a votive lay may bring
In honour of the Chief of Song?
The loftiest lay would do him wrong,
Unless another Burns should sing.

A pilgrim at our Minstrel's shrine,
Where Nature wakes with morning's fire
The echo of his thrilling lyre,
To stand in grateful tears be mine.

How oft when sad, and far away,

The melting voice of Coila's Bard
In all the "joy of grief" was heard
To triumph o'er the exile-day.

Condemn'd 'neath tropic skies to roam

Where scorching winds o'er deserts blew,
The mountain daisy bathed in dew,
Restored the hills and streams of home.

There, where no bird's sweet warblings rise,
To gladden India's dreary plain,
I heard in Burns the laverock's strain
Rejoicing in my native skies.

Wand'ring, forsaken, and forlorn,

The Bard of Love's entrancing power,
Recall'd the bliss of gloamin'-hour,
And vows beneath the trysting-thorn.

The friendships that beside the Tyne
Endear'd the scenes of joyous youth,
Rush'd back thro' tears in all their truth
To live again in "Auld Lang Syne."

When far from my own village spire,
And idols claimed each horrid rite,
O, with what sacred, pure delight,
I worshipp'd at the Cottar's fire!

And when to war the trumpet rung,
With what a high, exulting glow
The sons of Scotia met the foe
As men from Bruce and Wallace sprung!

Where'er a home-sick exile mourns
The vanish'd joys of early years,
The anguish of impassion'd tears
Finds utt'rance in the song of Burns.

Kings may expire, and states decay,
But long as lovely Nature reigns,
Her laureate-bard's attending strains
Will hold their everlasting sway.



XXXVI.

3 Drenn of Burns.

BY ROBERT P. SCOTT, LIVEBPOOL.

Wind of the winter midnight!

Wherefore sobbing thus and sighing?
Art thou wailing o'er the bygone?

Art thou prophesying woe?

Art thou telling of that midnight,

When a new-born infant's crying

Rose and mingled with thy rushing,

An hundred years ago?

Wind of the winter midnight!
Shrilling through the bleak black forest,
O'er waveless lakes, and silent streams,
And winding-sheets of snow!
When thine agony was wildest,
And thy sorrow was the sorest,
A mighty spirit came to earth,
Whose grief outwept thy woe.

Wind of the winter midnight:

Shrieking, sobbing at my casement.

Like a barred-out demon seeking rest

From its wandering to and fro;

Was there warning in thy wailing,

When the dark eyes, in amazement,

Of an infant opened on this world,

An hundred years ago?

Wind of the winter midnight!

As I hear thy shout of glory,

My thoughts arise from out me

With thy gusty ebb and flow;

I would sing the gloom and grandeur,

The sad and fitful story

Of the poet that was given to earth

An hundred years ago.

Born he was within a cottage by the winding, wandering Ayr, Nursed in poverty and sorrow, weaned in misery and care; From his birth-home on the moorland, when the morn was breaking dim—

When the twilight died in shadow—rose the prayer and swelled the hymn;

For a pious father's blessing, and a mother's bended knee, Watched and sanctified the slumber of his cradled infancy. Not to him came rosy childhood, laughing through its griefless year;

Life looked on him in his boytime, spoke to him of toil and fear.

Soon his hands were rough with labour, soon the sweat-drops gemmed his brow;

But his soul was heavenward soaring, while his fingers grasped the plough.

Soon the tears swam to his eyelids, why they came there, who may tell?

He was gladdest 'mid his glory! he was saddest when he fell!

Ah, he fell! let no one measure that sad depth to do him wrong:

Can we mete with earthly plummet his cloud-piercing heights of song?

If his not yet dead detractors fell as far from their own fame, ROBERT BURNS would shine unspotted 'gainst the blackness of their shame!

When we speak of him, speak only of the poet brave and true, Of the songs that 'woke sweet echoes 'mong our northern mountains blue,

Till the valleys of the Southron caught and mingled in the strain,

Till the soul of human nature bore them o'er the farthest main! While a heart throbs with the beating of a sympathising heart, While there's joy, or love, or sorrow, never shall his words depart.

If his birth was not as gentle as a noble's son might be,
On his forehead blazed the scutcheon of a higher pedigree:
For he traced his generation to the mighty who have sung
Strains that roll the old years backward, keeping earth for ever
young.

He was in their long procession, starting from the dawn of time, Marching onward, marching upward, to the verge of the sublime;

Catching glimpses, in their journey, of the land earth knoweth not,

Which the bard alone beholdeth, from the watch-towers of his thought.

Breaks in the wind of midnight with its endless dirge of woe, It hears me back on its unseen track an hundred years ago: I sit when the embers flash and flit, in a cot low roofed and bare;

I fall asleep to the murmur deep of the winding, wandering Ayr.

I sit, in my dream, by a pebbly stream, o'er me the shadow thrown

Of an ancient bridge, with a lofty ridge, and a mystic central stone.

Night closes on a sudden, wild sounds are on the wind,

Comes a foam-splashed steed, in sorest need, and a demon rout behind.

Thy faithful mare thou must not spare, on, fearful rider, on-

They have gained the bridge, they have crossed the ridge, the eldritch host is gone!

Who cometh next? A lonesome wight, and he staggereth drunkenlie:

A skeleton slim, with laughter grim, doth bear him companie;

Then a beggarly crew, with wild halloo, come dancing down the hill;

But I lose them in night and silence, and all save the stream is still.

The stars have faded out, and left but one in the brightening sky;

To that star so lone goes up a moan, and a wail of agony,

From the wild unrest of a grief-torn breast that heeds nor night nor day;

And that star of the dawn is sacred to the love death cannot slay:—

The first red arrow of the morn is shot from its golden quiver;

The lark's first note, from its sorrowless throat, ripples down with a joyous shiver,

And the mists are slowly floating along the winding river.

Touched by the finger of morning they change, until they seem

A troop of the fairest maidens gliding adown the stream.

Many were dressed in homeliest robes, some in the silks so gay;

And one was wrapped in a tartan plaid—a lovely Highland
May—

She held to her breast a holy book, her head bent low in grief;

The gurgling river sighed as she passed, and trembled the birken leaf.

Then came enthroned, on a couch of song, so beautiful a queen,

That tranced Nature sang her praise, by mount, and shaw, and green.

The flowers bowed as this queen went by, the birds sang loud and clear;

The daisy shook the tear from its eye, and the field-mouse felt no fear.

I cannot tell of their rosy lips, of their brows so tall and fair;

Of the love that lies in their lustrous eyes, and the heaven that dwelleth there.

I may not tell of the rapturous songs—the tones of undying love; They seemed as sung by an angel tongue to a harp from the choirs above.

The maidens passed,—and such a rout of motley followed after, With gleesome tale, and song, and shout, and daffin, jest, and laughter.

The Scotchman from his mountain bield, for war and whisky burning;

The broken soldier from the field to home and peace returning.

Blythe Nicol with his peck o' maut, hob-nob with honest Allan;

The Souter from the ingle nook, the landlord from the hallan;

Tam Samson with his dog and gun, and Hornbook with his potions;

And Grose perspiring 'neath a load of antiquarian notions.

And auld John Anderson my jo, and drouthy Johnny Pidgeon,
Unholy Willie, with his cant, defaming fair religion;
Kilmarnock wabsters, country lairds, gaugers and volunteers,
And herds of stubborn biped flocks, and herds of stirks and steers;
And many an honest man of Ayr, with sons of Mauchline follies;
And after all the human kind, "twa" douce contented collies.

But, hark! a piper, sooty, grim—drones bumming, chanter screaming—

Has given his bag so fierce a dirl, it breaks my charmed dreaming—

'Tis but the wind of midnight that wakes me from my sleeping, With its dirge of speechless agony, its sob of tearless weeping.



XXXVII.

In Memoriam.

BY V. Y., EDINBURGH.

ONE OF THOSE HIGHLY COMMENDED BY THE JUDGES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

Not for the dead are acclamations loud.

When a great soul from earth has passed away,
It is the silent homage of the crowd

That crowns his fame;
Such render we to-day—
To whom? the Peasant of immortal name.

An hundred years ago, a mother smiled, In her poor cottage, on the new-born child That tried to stretch its hands to her caress,— The life-dawn showing its own feebleness.

Years passed; and, lighted with a golden glee, The living plaything, round the mother's knee, Prattled its nothings; wheresoe'er it went, King of a little world of vast content.

CENTENARY POEMS.

The mountainous reality arose,

Years passed; and, with the body's growth, the mind Gained farther realm, as, gradually defined Around the cottage-level of his life,

Dreamlike with beauty; mingling peace and strife In all the gleamy joys and shadowy woes Of the life-struggle rising o'er distress,-Toil, trial, doubt, hope, energy, success; Till, gazing on the wondrous scene sublime, The boy felt that he too had power to climb. But what dread figure, with unlovely face, Confronted him, and pointed to a place As undistinguished as his lowly race? 'Twas Poverty; but that which might destroy The hopes of feeble men, increased the joy Of the instinctive greatness of the boy; Rousing the self-reliance that but shows More strength as difficulties round it close,— Resolved to triumph, let what will oppose; Its great content, where'er its fate be thrown, To be indebted to itself alone. And proudly measuring its strength in toil, He distanced others as they ploughed the soil; The scythe, the reaping-hook in sport he plied, Outstripping all who laboured at his side;-Transacting great ambition in the guise Of common tasks, he toiled towards a prize; Till nightfall called him back to the home-rest-A hero's feelings in the peasant's breast.

Then life grew charmed around the household hearth,

With his light play of wit and social mirth;

Or gave itself to laughter without bound,
As stories, none the worse for wear, went round;
Or owned the mightiness of simple art
In some grand ballad of the nation's heart;
Or marked the "gudeman," like a fruitful tree
Shaking the growth of half a century,
As the ripe wisdom of shrewd common sense
Fell from his lips, with more than eloquence;
Convincing with the homely charm of truth;
With knowledge, unawares, enriching youth,
And training them for honest victory
In the life-battle which was yet to be:
The household hours weaving their spell of bliss
Around the power of coming miseries.

Years passed; and, as the eaglet on bold height Grows conscious of its strength for sun-ward flight, The youth, exultingly, with instinct strong Looked upward to his future realm of song; With whose resplendence glorious nature stood

In beauty ne'er revealed to common eye;— The shaded mountains massed in solitude;

The streamlets' ever-murmuring symphony;
The winding valleys sheeted with green wood;
The dazzling heat-haze blending earth and sky;
The placid sunset's gorgeous canopy,
Changing to awfulness of starry night,
Lamping the silent darkness infinite—
'Twas rapture all, and ever new delight.

STEELS AT PIECE

The measured sements of more thought.

The measured sements of more thought.

Therefore the inner of sweet inners.

Therefore the inner of sweet inners.

The transport the feelings trained from her sweet inners.

Valid over the worn-law life traine the freshold.

Therefore the worn-law in the word was bieseed.

Leader they have a larger sphere.

Therefore the worn-law innersely manners.

And from the normal leadings as it were.

The tensors of minutenessed in Law's throng.

Team passed. No mygae in the a why beach. That feels turned a label beyond as reach. That fine is mainer virt for community Besider with emmerce has a meater thance Than had the hild-doy-you'd when marbood hame And set him in the firemest ranks of fame, As from the task mismown, without a name, A sadden star up-risen to central height. Belipping all the twinkling hosts of night Instead of peasant-audience, scant at best, When market-days called forth his ready jest. Rank, Wealth, Art, Science, Beauty round him stood. To gaze and listen, and feel themselves subdued To higher state. His musing solitude Had come forth in rich harvest. -the gathered might Of Genius full revealed in its own light.

CENTENARY POEMS.

His converse fascinated all who heard; But it was as the nation's bard He ruled the nation's heart, as undismayed As when upon the lone hill-side he strayed; Whilst from his soul, in independence strong, The world received the impulse of his song,-That varied song that touched the human heart In all its moods, new being to impart, With the felicity unknown to art:-The manly tenderness, like dewy bringing Of sun-smile to the flowers toward it springing; The humour gentle as a child, in freak Waking its nurse with kisses on the cheek; The hearty mirth, like breezy healthiness, Rustling life's by-hours with a common bliss; The playful fancy that can beautify The stern endowments of reality; The lofty feeling that can elevate Mankind with influence of the grand and great; The noble ardour that, with gathering fire, Imparts its power, inciting to aspire; The hate of wrong and pompous insolence; The scorn of every method of pretence; The proud resolve that will not compromise At fashion's bid, whate'er the sacrifice, Though feeble friends deride, and foes despise; The honest wrath that fearlessly decries And scourges villany, whate'er its guise; The valour of the patriotic breast, For ever on the side of the oppressed;

The brotherhood of man, that owns the claim
Of all alike who bear the human name—
These gave their varied colours to the thought
Cast by the light of genius o'er the land;
Accrediting the bard by Nature taught
To charm, to awe, to gladden, to command.
In sequel of his boyish wish to climb,—
In self-reliant power, on Fame's proud height,
He stood before his country, as the sign
Of native manhood with its inborn might;
And Freedom felt exalted at the sight.

Years passed. A mourning company, in gloom,
Stood silently around an open tomb,
With more of woe than shades the common doom;
For Scotland's bard was dead:
The earth was rattling on the coffin's lid.
The prime of life, the flashing eye,
The manly form—how awfully
Reality can sometimes seem
To wear the likeness of a dream!
His dream-like life concluding like a dream.

No thund'rous portent passed across the sky;

No awful form through nature seemed to sigh.

The purple heather, and the hare-bell blue

Not less put forth their beauty, side by side,

Upon the spot where the great genius grew,

And bloomed, and seeded to the winds, and died;

Even his very "daisy" decked the scene As smilingly as if he ne'er had been. It was the silence of a human woe, O'er all the land, which told that he was gone:-Well did such silence of a nation show, In prophecy, that he who slept below Would in his works live on,-Would still amuse, enchant, incite With the never-old delight; Still sing of Nature's loveliness; Fill the lovers' hearts with bliss; Chime the joys of happy youth; Chaunt the honesty of truth; Charm the tear from sorrow's eye; Cheer the daily drudgery; Give the exile dreams benign, Redolent of "auld lang syne;" And ever proudly lead the van That spreads the brotherhood of man,-Still pointing scorn at all who would oppress; Still urging patriots to the glorious strife; Still building up the nation's manliness;

Had he no faults? We need not name them here, When gathered, as it were, around his bier.

As when the moon arrays her scattered light
On woods, vales, mountains, till they all unite
In mellowed glory; whilst some towery height
Rears the tinged outline of its sullen might;

Still carrying grandeur into cottage life.

With here and there is imaging peak up-gleaning over all over that their sines the starry blue.

Back if in its toward with a softened line—
the toundless july where or we tarn our sight.—
As if the prospect while were mindy dreaming.

In the first becausy of its own deligher:

Even the shadows and dark blanks that lie.
On the waste fens, nontrasting with the sky.

May serve, and it he far-resplendent sheen.

To add as twere, a moral to the scene.

Saldening with useful thoughts which might not else have been.—

So with his faults amid the century

Which he has filled with beauty and delight.—
Let them apart, in their own shadows lie:
The wene is not less bright.

As heath some mighty dome, where History
Records her trophies to the eye
With statued pride and banners hung on high—
Through that great century.
Time with its pageant has passed by.
Leaving imperishable forms of fame
Its glory to proclaim.
There, with a varied grace,
'Mong them who ruled the human race,
The bards' creations, of all countries, stand,
Like blessings, binding land to land
With the beautiful and grand;—
Scotland to-day is pointing to that band.

There "Tam o' Shanter," matchless and sublime, Will draw the gaze of all succeeding time; And there "The Cottar" ever will impart His homely grandeur, to improve the heart; Whilst others, genial or grotesque, put forth The goodly features of a kindred worth-Achievements that attest the mighty bard; The fame he gave his country, his reward. Yet these are but as effigies to tell Of the wide magic of the poet's spell, Still working greatness out of deeds gone by-Circling the charm of human sympathy-Filling the air with beauty and delight-Blending existence with the ever bright-Bequeathing to our hearts the poet's might,---The impulse and the influence of his mind, As an inheritance for all mankind-In social welfare, the results it yields Out-valuing the wealth of golden fields.

Proud of that great inheritance, to-day
The nation has uprisen to show
Its love of him who entered life
An hundred years ago.

- Bookos

XXXVIII.

Another Stone for the Cairn.

BY MBS ALFRED M. MUNSTER, HOLTWOOD, BELFAST.

EXTRA PRIZE POEM AT BELFAST.

VANISHED! like gems that sink into the sea, And reappear no more.

An hundred years

Have flown, since, on the "bonnie banks o' Ayr,"

A mother smiled upon her new-born child.

Oh! how her heart had throbbed with pride and grief,
Could she have read the page of destiny,
And seen the name of her unconscious babe
Become a household word, where'er should reach
The language he should wreathe in richest songs—
Songs which shall live while human agony,
And love, and grief, and bitter sense of wrong
Shall need a voice to speak their cruel pangs!

O, Caledonia's crowning pride and shame!
I wander back in thought, and see the youth
Buried amid the sweet bee-haunted heath,
Drinking, at every pore of soul and frame,

The cloudless glory of the summer noon,,
While the air quivered with the lav'rock's song,
Building such fairy palaces, as earth
Holds not, save in the gorgeous dreams of youth
By Genius fired; I see thee vent thy strength
In rustic conclave, till the common herd
Said wonderingly—"This man is not of us."

I close mine eyes, and lo! a woodland scene,
Where from the moss the glitter of bright streams
Gives back the fretted sunlight, and the light
Is golden green beneath the leafy boughs.
The hawthorn's creamy bloom is in its pride,
And thou art there, beside thine Highland love—
The peasant girl, with soft brown hair, and eyes
So soon to close in that dread silent sleep
Whence cry of thine could never wake her more!

Thy truest love, whose image shines distinct Amid the bevy of light fantasies With which thou sought'st to fill the aching void Death made in claiming her.

I look still on,
And see thee torn by sense of injury,
And vain remorse, and hopeless, dull despair.
And consciousness of worth for higher meed
Than Scotia gave to thee, her deathless bard.

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CENTENARY POEMS.

But now, to thee the voice of praise or blame
Is equal. Never more thy heart can throb,
Though all the poisoned arrows Slander wings
Rain on thy grave, or if the hand of Fame
Rear over thee her proudest cenotaph.
O World! weigh well the gold against the dross;
Bear, in thy judgment of the mighty dead,
The thought of Him whose mercy never sleeps;
And then, if conscience holdeth thee absolved,
Cast down thy stone upon the grave of Burns.



XXXIX.

BY WILLIAM SAWYER, BRIGHTON.

"'And wear thou this,' she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head:
The polished leaves and berries red
Did rustling play:
And, like a passing thought, she fled,
In light away."—The Vision.

It is not dead—the holly crown
Which, as that wintry sun went down
On Mossgiel lapt in snow,
So fondly Coila's hand around
Her Poet's throbbing temples bound:
But still, with ruddy glow,
Its rustling leaves of shining green
The crimson berries burn between.

Fit chaplet for the brow that, white

And bare in Fortune's bleakest night,

Ached with immortal throes—

The laurel thrives while skies are blue;

The myrtle fed on sun and dew

Is sweeter than the rose;

But in keen frosts and bitter winds

Its hardy prime the holly finds.

And thus the Bard—whose infant life
Dawned midst the elemental strife—
Fate's roughest blasts defied:
Like the old hearts, in trial strong,
Who fought the battles of their song,
So he life's conflict tried;
And fighting to a noble grave
A hero's name to Scotland gave.

A noble dower! Yet justly due
To Scotland, since his genius drew
From her its vital heat:
For he was nursed upon her breast,
His heart to hers so closely prest
That every pulse and beat,
Throbbing responsive, tone for tone,
Became the motion of his own.

The foremost souls of every time

No common ties of race or clime

Have to their country bound;

But, of its very life a part,

Have in the genial mother heart

Their inspiration found:

So Scotland all his being fired,

And with herself his muse inspired.

From her his eager fancy caught

The power that wakened with a thought

To terror or delight:

That in the stream the Naiad saw;
And in the gloaming, shapes of awe;
And in the winds of night,
Heard banners flap like riven sail,
And dying groans, and woman's wail.

By her infused, a holy love
Of Nature in his bosom strove,
Deep, passionate, intense,—
Not only for the wild and strange,
The sunset glow, the mountain range,
That charm the grosser sense;
But for the loveliness that lies
In barren moors and ashen skies.

But chiefly by the nameless grace,

The radiant light of woman's face,

The Poet's heart was stirr'd.

Love came to him as comes the breeze

Of Summer to the budding trees,

As sunshine to the bird,

Till with its warmth his bosom glowed,

And passion into music flowed.

Pleasant the song to Love addressed;
But Scotland in her Poet's breast
Awoke a manlier aim;
With Freedom charm'd his eager sight,
For the pure forms of Truth and Right
Woke a responsive flame;

And showed life, not through wealth or state, But struggle and endurance, great!

And well he played his manly part,
Schooling that hot, impetuous heart
A peasant's life to bear:
Stood at the plough, as Royal-souled
As he a nation bade of old
The regal purple wear;
And toiled, since what from toil he drew
Was bread—and independence, too!

So gifted with each varied power

He sped—as from his Lady's Bower

Passed forth the Fairy Knight

In the enchanted armour clasp'd;—

He, too, a charmed falchion grasp'd

Invincible in fight,

And in the strength of Scotland, strong,

Entered the ringing lists of song.

And when his voice the silence broke,

A pulsing echo it awoke

In every listening heart:

Love had no sweetness, grief no pain,

Mirth no conceit, but of the strain

It formed a mystic part;

And when of manhood's rights he sang,

Full-handed thunders echoing rang.

And loud the tumult of applause

When, in religion's outraged cause,

He penned the Holy Prayer.

And glances keen as flashing swords

Approved the fierce, exulting words,

That bade men "do and dare,"

When "Scots wha hae" the strain began,

Fit closing in—"A Man's a man."

Thus, by still varying moods beguiled, As to its mother sings a child,

He sang in Scotland's ear, Content her answering smile to gain, Till, borne to other lands, the strain

To other hearts grew dear;
And from that hour the ploughman's name
A sign and word of power became.

And now, wherever on earth's round
Brave souls and gentle breasts are found,
Men true and women pure—
Wherever Freedom's standard waves,
Or Love in rosy chains enslaves,
And willing serfs endure;
Wherever to men's hearts belong
The instincts of undying song—

There, as a fond, familiar word,

At every hearth one name is heard—

And when the fight is fought

Of human rights and human needs,

As rallying cry to noble deeds

Men's lips that sound have caught,

And answering rank to rank returns

The deathless name of—ROBERT BURNS!

And as above the blinding glow
Of heaven, when the sun is low,
And clouds are fierce with flame,
Deep in the zenith's calmest blue
The faint stars quicken on the view,—
So will the Poet's fame
Shine on through every century's flight,
An orb of ever-gathering light.

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XL.

BY ROBERT BOWER, MELBOSE.

O, some would write for gear and gain, and some would write for fame;

But we would write to add our mite of honour to his name!

'Tis but a trivial tribute that a single pen can pay,

Let the aggregate of homage, then, confess his mighty sway;

And a race go on adoring while Genius breathes its spell;

Faith and feeling's deepest worship not reason's self can tell.

'Twas the weaver at the loom, and the whistler at the plough—

His own compeers—who first confessed what worlds believe in now.

And where he saw fair women, and honoured honest men, There are worthy sons and daughters, bright and true and fair as then.

'Tis not alone what man has been, but what a man may be,
That yet shall rouse to better things the worth of such as he;
And the world's true congress yet shall bloom o'er statecraft, and
the throng

Of the only true Republic, bend before the poet's song.

Through his life and through his music like electric tremor ran The dignity of labour and the dignity of man. He mi the toll that mail of life he maste most is known.

Viere was recented to graden wrenth, but cheerful weaves its

Where about rests it ristant white and ther the tuneful hum, went thoughts of poutring tays gone by, or better days to come. The where the rig of tyming would stiffe freedom's word. That the spirit of its music shall be breath it titho unheard: Where Bigotry with inter men issures the name of Heaven, And thought must be obedient to the fletates she has given: I'll opinion bursts its hoofigues, and bounding in the sir. Provisions that 'man can in whatever man can dare."

Through the spirit-land of finey ran a rapturous delight.

When the land with mythic glory bestarred the darksome night—

When free and yen-handed he strewed his pearls of worth.

To be gathered if r the households to brighten up the hearth—
When humour stood a bridegroom and pathos stood a bride,
And the poet-priest problaimed them in marriage links allied.

At the matin-crow of science, when the goblins saw the sun,
They would have field affrighted though their mission was not
done;

But the poet called them back and limned them stark and true,
And left the myths of olden time an heirship to the new—
Like the Gothic work of cloisters grotesquely carved and grim,
Yet with breath in every nostril, and with life in every limb.
Each weirdly witch and warlock had his mark and wish of weal;
And with reverence, love, and charity he spoke of Scotland's
"Deil,"

"I'm wae to think upon you den for your sake," 'tis expressed; And the poet's deep-souled humour has sanctified the jest.

We see with reverent wonder what beauty, love, and grace The bard can give to simplest things that deck the lowliest place;

To what, save for his magic touch, seemed but the dross of ore,
The touch that makes man wiser and richer than before.
He sang no maudlin song of love, or wine to lull to rest;
But a song to rouse to action tho' with tenderness expressed.
'Twas the sternness of reality that moved him everywhere—
In the strong man's deep devotion, in the strong man's deep despair;

In the strong man's casual revelry, when, like a seer in drink, He rose, and winged with eloquence what he was wont to think;

In his vehement claim for all that to honest worth is due, In his hatred of the mean and false, and honour of the true.

Whate'er he said, whate'er he did, pathetic or sublime,
Of rich or rare, he left his mark to bide the shocks of time;
Even devious steps imprinted plain, each prying wight may scan,

Till he presume to mete thereby the measure of the man.

What though he showed a weakness when his locks of strength were shorn,

When Christian Graces chid with love, and Furies laughed in scorn!

CENTENARY POEMS.

What though our new hypocrisies cry, "See what things he did,"

And Cant still smiles to Prudery and shakes his holy head!
Still Charity will shield his name where'er his light shall beam;
And the more the world shall know of him, the more it will esteem.

CARRENT -

XLI.

BY JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS, A.R.A.

ALL through the realm a single cry
Is heard unanimously raised,—
Pledge ROBERT BURNS'S memory,
And let his honoured name be praised!

Unite, and meet, with one accord,

To swell and propagate his fame,
And stand beside the festive board

To drink a bumper to his name!

The palace, hall, and mansion ring
With one long hearty acclamation;
And church bells peal, as for a king
In triumph to his coronation.

And so thou art a king indeed,

New crown'd this day that thou wert born;
In life thou did'st not get thy meed

Of praise, for "man was made to mourn."

2 D

Whatever were thy faults, thy heart
Was deep with love and tenderness.
And never lived thy counterpart
For unaffected manliness.

So kindly and so sweetly sad.

So animated, bright, and strong—

How many hearths hast thou made glad

With thy incomparable song!

Ah: could thy shadow this day roam,
And come, like Banquo, as a guest,
And flash thro' space, from home to home,
A glow would kindle in thy breast,

To see that mix'd and swaying mass, By all those wonders new to thee, Within that mighty span of glass, Vibrating to thy minstrelsy.

From this to scenes of waste and snow—
The lonely shepherd in his plaid,
Deep melancholy, breathing low
"To Mary, dear departed shade."

And, further still, to lands unknown,
And undiscovered in thy time,
The home-sick wanderer will own
Thy "daisy" blows in any clime.

XLII.

The Mission of Burns.

BY JOHN FINLAY, GLASGOW.

I.

A NOBLE man, the mighty Poet's sire,

To poverty and high-soul'd virtue born;

Deep in his heart there burn'd celestial fire,

Though bow'd with hardships, or by anguish torn.

The weary closing day, and blushing morn

Rich with the voice of psalms, and lowly prayer,

The old and young, with rustic labour worn,

Felt in their glowing hearts God's gracious care;

And sweet contentment filled each humble bosom there.

II.

Th' unwilling soil may grudging harvests yield,
And unrewarded toil may bring dismay,
The sweeping tempest waste the fruitful field,
And gloomy night close in the hopeless day;
Yet honour, justice, truth, in meek array,
Erect, unbending, through the evil hour
Will keep and guide them in the narrow way:
These round the cottage hearth a shield and tower,
Raised by the watchful care of an Almighty Power.

Ш.

One hundred years of toil and suffering past,
Again the bright auspicious day returns,
Shining resplendent 'mid the darkness vast,
For ever hallow'd by the name of BURNS.
The lofty pyramids, and lowly urns,
Are frail memorials of the blazon'd throng;
While he whose fate the tender heart still mourns,
The child of sorrow and immortal song,—
His great undying thoughts to nations all belong.

IV.

No rich inheritance his early lot;
His birth obscure, no long ancestral line;
His wealth a mind with genius high in-wrought;
His rustic muse a special gift divine.
The "rustling holly" round his brow entwine,
A crown of glory wreath'd by Coila's hand;
Go forth, she said, with wit and wisdom shine,
Thy native lyre with graceful skill command,
And breathe the tender tale in song supremely grand.

v

Old Superstition lash, with satire keen.
On brooding Darkness pour the burning ray,
Unveil Hypocrisy, of visage mean,
Bid tyrants tremble on their thrones of clay,
Corruption smite with ruin and decay;
Raise with a gentle hand the crouching slave,

Unbind the chains, proclaim the joyful day;

Wake in young hearts the freedom nature gave,

And from Oppression's doom your dear-loved country save.

VI.

Wisdom and Folly, Vice and Virtue met;
In Church and State confusion wildly reigned;
The sun of Scotland's glory darkly set,
And pure Religion wept her honour stained,
While Ignorance and Pride devotion feigned;
The present hour their selfish, only care,
The "rite" divine, with thoughtless mirth, profaned;
Unblushing, in the sacred house of prayer,
Transformed the high design into the "Holy Fair."

VII.

Then Scotia's Bard poured forth his fiery strain,
Enraptured thousands heard the anthem swell,
And joined their voices in the great refrain,
Sounding in measured tones the awful knell,
As hoary systems of corruption fell.
Stern Justice raised aloft her equal scale,
And "mad Ambition" groaned its long farewell;
Sweet Mercy from the dust rose trembling, pale,
And Truth triumphant rode before the sweeping gale.

VIII.

With glowing eloquence and lofty lays,

He praised the dignity of manly worth,

And cheered the toil-worn peasant's weary days
With songs of gladness, round the lowly hearth.
These social hours of innocence and mirth,
Their anxious thoughts and homely cares beguile;
No fairer scene can e'er be found on earth,
Than goodness hand in hand with honest toil,
The humble guardians they, and glory of our isle.

IX.

To fields and flowers he gave a vocal tongue:

New opening glories meet our wondering eyes—
O'er love and beauty nameless charms he flung—
To all mankind his glowing sympathies;
Set hope's bright rainbow in life's troubled skies,
Arching with beauty Love's enchanted ground,
All fair and blooming with celestial dyes;
Despised humanity with honour crown'd,
And man to brother man in friendship closer bound.

X.

He sang of love, in warm impassioned strains,
Of human weal, and heart-felt human woe,
Burst in his scornful wrath Oppression's chains,
And taught the springs of Charity to flow;
The haughty tyrant's unrelenting foe,
The patriot's friend, of every age and clime,
He fanned to life the sympathetic glow,
And to mankind, in all succeeding time,
Bequeath'd the deathless song of love and truth sublime.

VΙ

His "woodnotes wild" above old Ocean's roar,
In kindred lands are ringing high and clear;
The bounding echoes leap from shore to shore,
Breaking in melody on every ear.
The march of armies in their dread career,
Of cruelty and hate the vengeful sign.
Before the power of song shall disappear;
The savage rude, subdued by strains divine,
Will learn the arts of peace, and wasting war resign.

XII.

Thou mighty Bard, to Scotia ever dear,

The growing splendour of thy truthful lays,
The fainting heart with vigour strong will cheer,
And brighten up with hope the future days;
But dearer still, when gathering nations raise
Their grateful homage to our patriot Bard,
In one full voice of universal praise.

Thus in all ages shall thy name be heard,
The poet of all time, thy rich and great reward.



XLIII

Ebe Light of Burns.

BY WM SHELLEY FISHER, ADREDERS.

Arown the vale of hopes and fears We'll journey back a hundred years. And try to learn the dreary state Of loving hearts left desolate.

How piteous! how cold and drear!

No stars on Night's black face appear:
The wild winds from the frozen North
In wintry gusts come swirling forth;
The angry waves, with threatening roar,
Dash fiercely 'gainst the Carrick shore;
The winding Doon, as yet unsung,
Flows murmuring the woods among.

But lo! you cottage window pane—
Bespattered with the pelting rain—
Pours forth a stream of cheering light
Into the troubled womb of night.
Within that cot a child is born;
The storm abates—Behold the morn!

The light prevails—the woodland bowers Are beautiful with opening flowers; The singing birds their mates have won; The wild bees' harvest is begun: That simple peasant child that plays About the "bonnie banks and braes" Is poortith's future Bard, whose mind Shall thrill the masses of mankind.

Oh! surely childhood's faith is right;
The world is walked by angels bright—
Else how could one poor prisoned soul
Work out such good—such ill control?
Else how could men rejoice to see
The sweet calm side of poverty,
Where wedded love and wedded worth
(The holiest unity on earth),
With precepts wise, and practice mild,
Along life's footpaths lead the child,
And teach him how to walk the plain,
The mansion-gates of Love to gain?

The Light grows brighter; Thought expands;
The sceptre shines in Beauty's hands;
Sweet Virtue glides across the lea
With almost angel dignity;
While maiden warmth and modest grace
Flash from her eyes and flush her face;
The ploughboy stops his team awhile,
Enraptured with dear woman's smile;

His soul speaks out in song and prayer, And Coila hails the Bard of Ayr!

The Poet's quickened fancy reads In stately trees and lowly weeds-Sweet in detail, grand in design, The autograph of Power Divine! The silent lakes and lisping streams Seem laughing back Love's slanting beams; While in the shallows near the shore, Rich gems, that were not seen before, Shine bright as stars in frosty skies, And look with meaning like Love's eyes; The modest daisies of the field More graceful grow, more sweetness yield, And gaily wanton in the sun, As if the sinless things had won The power of thought, and knew that he, The Bard of honest poverty, Would greet them with a music-strain, Sweet as the skylark's after rain.

Now wend we up you winding stream,
Where beauty shames our brightest dream;
Behold within the "hallowed grove"
How Nature weeps the wane of love!
The loving pair apart are riven;
Though both have wept and prayed and striven
For hearth and altar, all is vain—
On earth they never meet again.

The one is smiled to realms of rest
More lovely than "the glowing west;"
And one is left to brave awhile
The withering blight of grief and guile,
And work out friendless poortith's part,
And open wide his loving heart
In songs that brighten beauty's cheek—
In passion's lofty strains that speak
A rushing forth of soul, and teach
All hearts that speak our country's speech
That manhood, womanhood, and youth,
For ever welcome native truth—
That Beauty, Love, and Virtue claim
The Bard whom Nature leads to fame.

The light makes glorious noontide now;
The holly decks the poet's brow;
And he who lately ploughed the land
Goes forth like one who bears command;
Bright Fortune charms him with her smile,
And strains him to her heart awhile;
The brave, the beautiful, the wise,
All hold him kindly in their eyes.

The light now seems to wane apace;
The veil is down o'er Beauty's face;
Cold winds lay bare Love's aching breast;
The flowers lean weeping to the west;
The cottar's carkin cares are o'er;
The waves make moan on Solway shore.

Why weep, ye sisters?—dry your tears:
The poet's soul gains brighter spheres
Of thought and action! Good and ill
Are measured out by Justice still!
The sun sets but on scenes diurnal;
The Light is Love, and Love's eternal.

Though Death, that keeps the mansion gate-Grim Death, that grins at worldly state-Has crushed the clay with his cold hand, Obedient to Life's command; Yet Burns the bard shall never wane While Scotland's fame and speech remain. He pours the warmth of growing day, In slanting beams along our way; He bids us man the world with love, And through all changes, toil to prove Our strength to pass, from sire to son, Those blessings that the brave have won. He yields the thoughtful of our kind An ocean-depth of faith in mind-Sweet faith, that gives the spirit power To turn Time's wondrous volume o'er, And read the loving Father's sign On every page—in every line That brings this comfort home to man-"Lo, Mercy works out Wisdom's plan!"

Then cast out fear and work down woe, And Beauty round our souls shall throw

CENTENARY POEMS.

The sun-warmth of the spirit-land,
And give us power to understand
That those whom Love holds dear at heart,
Shall never wholly hence depart,
But live within us, and increase
Our love of knowledge, truth, and peace,
That make us kin to all the might,
And all the grandeur, vast and bright,
And all the wondrous depth of soul
That light the myriad worlds that roll
Around the glorious Throne Divine
Of Burns's God—and yours—and mine.

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A reason wy wis non

Wham a cape det hat ambebleit beg in snow.

Han in her homely plaid

The trangal mother half.

And a ckel him with her song, her tender strain and low.

Meanwhile the thoughtful sire.

Beside his dull peat fire.

Lookei ... his first-born son and prayed;-

The peasant father grave and good.

In self-re-train'd stern hardihood

Inured to pain and toil, To cleave a rugged thankless soil,

To sow for scant returns:

In such a humble cot,

In such a straitened lot,

Where want and thrift ran equal race,
Our peasant poet found his place,
And glorified his name—the name of ROBERT BURNS!

П.

Kin to the stormy breeze
From Scandinavian seas,
That scours along the glen,
Hardening the pith of Scotia's men,
And nerving every son she bears,
To grapple boldly with life's cares,
To stand when perils threat;—
So proved this boy in truth,
Yielding in labour's noble sweat
His generous sap of youth.
And not in vain he grew
Close to the moorlands blue,
Athwart whose gloaming dim the moth-wing'd legends flew.

Those heaving moorlands, Tyrian-hued,
Where kings might cushioned lie,
Spread couches for his solitude;
And torrents, foaming by,
From their branchy mosses bore
Fragments weird of fairy lore,—
Told him of the warlock well;
Of the black linn on the fell;
Of the haunted Rowan bank
On the mountain's caverned flank;
Of the knotted Hawthorn seat,

Where the trysting lovers meet;-

Thus did moves and waters free Years a Sun of Liberty

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Barri of the plough—elect on high! Arthralate voice of passions pent! A people's great damb soul found vent, And world-wide echoes, in his cry. Champion of modest Truth was he; The haughty crest of Pride he bowed, And stripped from vile Hypocrisy Her saintly mask that cheats the crowd. War's bounding pulse he set to song, Its clarion filled with patriot breath, Till heroes on his words wax strong, And chant them as they march to death. Around the Stuarts' mortal throes, Convulsing in a kingdom's woes, He flung the glamour of his rhymes.-He spun a shroud so rich, so rare. That men forgot the living crimes, To see the corpse so fair. But Love was aye his dearest theme: Its hopes, its fears, that soothe and fret; Its boundless trust, its broken dream, Its unappeasable regret. O frank Heart, never harbouring spite! O falchion Satire, flashing keen! How welcome was your genial light Beside the hearth at Hallowe'en.

When Fancy sheathed the dangerous blade, And but its jewelled hilt display'd!

IV.

Alas! his day was brief;
A day of cloud and grief,
Like ours who speak his name:
Perchance his blot of human shame
Showed larger to his fellows' view,—
Seeding outside its fungous spore,—
Than many a soul stained through and through,
Smooth at the rind, corrupt at core,
Gnawed by a vice that dreads the light,
So leaves the surface clean and bright.

V.

He loved—he suffered—he aspired—
And then death hid his face;
But his persistent Spirit's trace
Every hour grows deeper:
Through the hundred years untired,
Loud and louder sings the sleeper!
Witness! blithe-tongued Scottish maid;
Witness! peasant at the spade;
Sailor, to the dash of brine,
Whistling notes of "Auld Lang Syne;"
Soldier, rallying to the fight,
In the name of Wallace wight;

Recorded away mappeded.

By the threats of Program Canid."—

Lying armay of lying lyre.

Full to swell the mineral's units.

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Win may span · jelow-worsers That mighty rivin-shore Anak thews? In our small stock of inity does We have no measure for the man. Let из. whose рушну въгре сам разв So lightly ther the meadow grass. Behald with awe where devices stray A giant's fact-marks, charged with clay Tis ever said, that richest wine Flows from the lava-rooted vine: The torrent loosed at loftlest source Is alway first to flood its course: The wind that cleanses plague-struck city Must blow its hardest gale: And if there founder some small sail, Or aged oak come toppling down, The health-swept alleys of the town Both justify its rage, and chide our senseless pity.

VII.

Lo, every century has been rife
With forms of base and baneful life!
But aloe-flowers, like Burns, are rare,
And when they bloom are ill accost;

Blank Ignorance stands by to stare,
And Rancour nips them with her frost;
While ledger-lords who hug the notion,
That ferny glen and heathy chase,
The granite rock, the buoyant ocean,
Are but a change of market-place;—
Each bird that warbles, herb that grows,
Expressly made for food and clothes;—
These, when a Poet sings aloud,
Push, sneering, through the careless crowd,
And murmur, selfishly obtuse:
"Tis fine—'tis strange—but where the use?"

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The use! such use as strolling gales That seem to idle on the seas, Yet bring to port rich argosies, By simply breathing on their sails-Such use as restless billows' play That, eddying round the Carib bay, Troubles the tides, and heaves them forth A warm Gulf stream to soothe the north. What use! such use as ray that cleaves The silky cincture of the leaves, When, bursting through each white cocoon, The summer's curtain veils the noon. Such use as salt to ocean's flood: As oxygen to vital blood; As light to dreary city den; As Liberty to Saxon men!

Such use have Poets; given to be Thy central heat—Humanity!

IX.

Therefore, although a hundred years With skaith and scaur, have sped; Though they who lived with Burns are dead, Forgot among their peers, No thought of his has turned to dust, No keen-edged satire gathered rust, No love-note, on its passion-quest, Missed echo in the answering breast, Or warrior anthem failed its charge To Scotsmen on the battle's marge: Still by the hearth his music pours, Still sea-like beats the distant shores; And prairies tracked by lonely feet From end to end his lays repeat. He needs not us to sound his fame, Gathered beneath this crystal sphere,- -Wide, like his spirit, high and clear,-To celebrate his name: To own, that land is blest that bears Such peasant at her plough, A soul that, at its darkest, dares Its own true self avow. See, from her hills, old Scotia yearns Above her Poet Child;

From Canada's savannahs wild,

CENTENARY POEMS.

From Hindoo jungles, English farms,
Our brother men stretch forth their arms,
Pledging with reverential hymn,
With tingling veins, and eyelids dim,
And beakers running o'er the brim,
The deathless name of ROBERT BURNS!

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XLV.

By W. C. BENNETT, GREENWICH.

And have a hundred springs had birth,
A hundred autumns died,
Since God in love gave him to earth,
Whose glory is our pride?
That century's regal forms grow dim,
Its noisier fames grow still,
Yet here to-day we honour him
Whose words our memories fill;
In solemn reverence to his name,
Who deeper reverence earns,
With every coming year from fame.
We meet—to honour Burns.

Yes, years have gone—their joys and woes,
And thrones and rules have passed,
But not his fame; now glory knows
That shall for ever last
As deathless as his nation's tongue:
While hearts can glow and thrill,
His songs by nations shall be sung,
His thoughts shall rule us still.

To-day in his dear words, how well Each heart rejoicing learns Its joys—its hopes—its griefs to tell, And laughs and sobs with Burns!

Dust unto dust—yes, young he died,
And Scotland gave him tears,
Who shall be evermore her pride,
Her glory through all years;
Yet, though God early stayed his breath
And gave him to the tomb,
His deathless memory mocks at death,
And spurns its mortal doom;
Time and decay why should he fear?
Lo, death its weakness learns,
While we to-day have with us here
The living words of Burns.

Look, broadcast thrown around the earth,
What nations from us sprung,
What glorious Freedom leaps to birth,
And speaks our English tongue!
And not a land that owns our sway,
Where eyes grow bright or dim
With English laughs or tears to-day,
To-day but thinks of him;
No lip, however far away,
His native tongue that learns,
But names with love and awe to-day
The memory of Burns.

The will have a more more than the last will have a nonder how the many a nonder how the house had be rejoiced to the house had be rejoiced to the house had been a truck of the house had been a none of the house had have he had been a none of the house had have he had he had

very of at the count.

Very of at the count.

Vic one—is living the long lay now.

Vic denies the tarksome room.

Then tarefor assist populates first.

The ugh aim though lightlier borne.

His songs make thes, and carie, forget.

That i man was made to mourn:

O dighted love. O weary life.

Each heart that sickens learns.

To half forget time's bitter strife.

With you, ye songs of Burns.

To "Auld Lang Syne" the needle flies; While "Scots wha hae" he sings, The smith his hammer swifter plies, The anvil louder rings; "Ye banks and braes," that soldiers hum,
The silent night can catch;
What dreams of Scotland with it come
To cheer that sailor's watch!
And many an exile far away
From Ayr and Tweedside, learns
To hold them dearer, day by day,
Through you, ye songs of Burns.

Sunshine of song, what tender light
On life thou com'st to fling,
To half cheat sorrow to delight,
Half make even anguish sing;
In looks of praise, well may we lift
Our thankful eyes to Heaven,
That to our land this priceless gift,
His matchless songs are given!
For all its scorn thy land atones;
With reverence, Scotland learns
No nobler heritage she owns,
Than these thy songs, O Burns.

Care, labour, grief, the rich man's scorn
He knew—the proud man's sneer,
Yet nobly want and toil were borne
By him we honour here;
He felt, as only genius can,
He plodding at his plough,
That God had made him even the man
We feel that he is now;

Scorned, poor, he dared to walk erect, And he who's lowliest learns From him, to feel in self-respect The dignity of Burns.

O Scotland, bonnie are thy braes,
Thy vales and hills are fair;
Yet, sweeter that he sings thy praise
Is even thy very air;
Thy streams, that through their broomy banks
In beauty gleam along,
Sing as they flow, to him their thanks
More sweetly for his song;
O Nith, O Ayr, ye bonnie streams,
How many a far heart learns
From him to hear you in its dreams—
You sung by Robert Burns!

And tender as a woman's own,

That manly heart, while here,
That gave all misery groan for groan,
All suffering tear for tear;
The mousie's "wee bit" ruined nest
Sighs from his heart could call,
Immortal pity filled his breast,
Immortal love for all;
How quick with laughter to rejoice,
To grieve with grief, by turns,
To give all woes and joys a voice,
Still liv'st thou, Robert Burns!

We know that he was mortal—know
That passions fierce and strong
Bore him, how often! here below,
A helmless bark, to wrong;
Yet pity him; give Burns no scorn;
For none, do what he might,
The wrong he did could deeplier mourn,
Or better love the right;
Through all, until his great heart broke,
To God his reverence turns,
True unto truth in all he spoke;
Then judge not Robert Burns.

O ye who toil, to whom this life
Is not, as to the few
A luxury, but a weary strife,
Love him; he sang for you;
The people's rights—the people's wrongs—
Their griefs—their joys, to sing,
He lived; still with them, in his songs,
He makes the wide earth ring;
How unto us, the people, still
His love—his pity yearns!
Well may his songs our memories fill,
Our lips be loud of Burns!

mentioner.

XLVI.

BY SYDNEY WHITING.

ONE OF THOSE HIGHLY COMMENDED BY THE JUDGES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPETITION.

Forms of eternal beauty haunt the mind, When mournfully, and yet elate we breathe The name of Scotland's Poet and her son; And down the vista of a hundred years The torch still brightly burns which Genius lit. The finest shreds of song in warp and woof Were interwoven in his melodies; And like some tapestry with golden threads, Depicting images of by-gone years, His pictures of poetic skill will last Unfaded heir-looms to remotest days. A melting tenderness, like gentle tones From other spheres, subdued and harmonised The vigour of his verse, and as we see The water-lilies on the river ope Their ivory petals, and with eyes of love Gaze upward on the azure canopy, And yet their roots within the clay beneath;

So he, upon the flowing stream of time, Expanded all the sweet leaves of his soul And gazed on high, yet doom'd with roughen'd hand To dig and delve the clay of common earth. 'Twas strange, and strange as beautiful, to find A soul encradled in a peasant's home Cast off its narrow preconceived thoughts; And like a Pegasus in labour's yoke, Fold up its wings, and bear its humble lot. Oh sure it were a symbol half-divine To find him casting forth the fruitful seed, And yet, in manner like, to know he sowed Such thoughts in human hearts, as soon should make All Scotland ring with praises of the fruit! His harvest home of golden song was ripe And beautiful, and midst the bounteous sheaves The soft cyanes with their eyes of blue Were garnered in;—those dainty flowers of rhyme Which grew amongst the treasures of his lays. As sculptors mould the common clay to forms Of loveliness, so Nature, from the fields And plough-share, call'd her gifted minstrel forth.

Mayhap his manly words sound somewhat harsh To southern ear, but sweetest kernels oft Are set in roughest rinds, and Nature then, To make the grateful earth receive the seed, Bursts all the coating as the fruit doth fall:—
Thus time in southern lands has broke the husk

Of northern sound, and in a loving soil

The seeds of his mellifluous song are fallen.

Nature, its seems, takes little heed of birth, At least so far in that mysterious gift-The gift of poesy. Where learn'd our Bard The cunning of his rhymes? How did he ken The various measures of his verse, which changed In force and tone like some Æolian strain? Anon, a love-lay trembled on the strings; Or harsher tone of war-song clang'd along; Or story quaint, of goblins and of fays, Set all the chords in shivering sympathy; Or in some mournful dirge a wailing sprite Died in vibrations of the trembling harp. Then changing yet again like tuneful reeds A strain pandæan spoke of sylvan love; Or some sweet idyl of Theocritus Was echoed from the classic groves; or tone Of Moschus, or of Bion, seemed to hint That Nature makes her best-loved Poets speak In accents similar;—yet seldom thus, For Burns was simply Burns—himself—alone; And when he blew his sterner blasts along, And flung his gauntlet in the cause of truth, No poet ever crowned in capitol Stood so apart. Oh surely he hath set A beauteous Iris in the sky of hope, To tell us that the world of human worth Will ne'er by flood of vice be deluged more!

How learn'd he all? Whence came the power to view Creation's hand impress'd in humble forms? Was it the "lilies of the field" raised up His hopes and inspirations heavenward? When singing of the "crimson-tipped flower," Did it suggest to his enchanted view Those bright celestial lab'ratories, where Not flowers alone receive their wondrous gifts, But where all harmonies divine are wrought? The maxima and minima of things Work with a godlike hand, which raising up The "cloud-capp'd hills," yet pausing stoops to paint, With delicate and most elaborate skill, The humble daisy on the sloping sward. All this he knew; of this and more he sang, And smallest forms of Nature's mysteries, Which to the common gaze were nought-to him Were exquisite. As tiller of the soil He soon became earth's best interpreter; And hieroglyphics of the fields and woods Found an exponent in his tuneful lays. To him the tinted children of the soil-The flowerets in their coats of divers hue-Were lessons in the earth's astronomy; And floral constellations group'd about, Were as celestial, to his loving gaze, As those bright garlands of the midnight sky Which we call stars, and which can only bloom Like to the cereus on the robe of night.



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"ETTITLET PHEME

Then issue will bear Poet of the fields.
For manufa the union of thy marrial part
Response when the unit main entry crypt.
Thy spiral is ensurined in Seastish hearts.
And English to: he Genius such as thine
Hath no especial home ton lights us all.
Time is the periodal on which it stands:—
And as the peaks of thy own mountains rise
All crown I with gold when sunset paints the scene.
A glory tinged the fabric of thy fame,
When life sank gently in the silent shades

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XLVII.

BY EXCELSIOR, BELFAST.

NEVER more shall we behold him. Never more his accents hear, But he seems to dwell amongst us-Ever present, ever near. For the words he spoke when living Meet us in life's daily walk; In the printed page and ballad, In our fireside's careless talk; Words that, barbed with truth and beauty, Pierce their way into the heart, And become, for ever after, Of the inmost soul a part. Oh, our days, how dark and dreary, And our lives, how full of gloom, Had we not such voices ever Speaking to us from the tomb! Weaving, into life's dark tissues, Graceful flowers of varied hue, Decking out the old familiar With an aspect fresh and new; Giving to the trees and rivers, And to all mute things, a voice; 2 н

Whispering, 'midst our cares and trials, Words that make our hearts rejoice. Genius! O how great and glorious Is thy mission on this earth! Oft in humble guise thou comest, Oft mysterious is thy birth. Like the princess who, for ages, In a death-like slumber lay, Till a touch to life aroused her-As the fairy legends say-So does Genius often slumber, For long years, within the breast, Till a happy chance awakes it To perform some high behest, Shedding a bright ray of glory On, perhaps, some lowly name, Giving it a place in story, And a never-dying fame; As with Burns, the Scottish peasant, He, the bard we honour now, Who composed melodious numbers, As he walked behind the plough. Raise the statue to his honour! Crown the poet's lifeless bust, Still his spirit lingers with us, Though his body is but dust.



XLVIII.

BY S. S.

A VOICE resounds along the Atlantic waves,
From East to furthest West its echoes ring,
From Polar steeps to India's coral caves,
Where'er the buds of human feeling spring:
A vision rises to the fancy's gaze—
A god-like figure mid a rustic throng;
His lofty brow is crowned with living bays;
His lips pour forth a tide of burning song;
His eagle eyes the fettered nations scan,
And dauntless he proclaims the brotherhood of man!

Those lips are mute—that form shall glow no more,
With all a poet's, patriot's, prophet's fire:
Yet, in the blighted fate we still deplore,
Have we forgot the breathings of his lyre?
Look round on this o'er-arching crystal dome,
To-day a temple to enshrine his fame,
Where kindred minds, within Art's noblest home,
Yield up their homage to his laurelled name;
Then ask, with heaving breast and flashing eye,
What higher guerdon could be won by Poesy?

An age has circled in the sweep of time,
Since first the slanting sun shone on the brow
Of infant genius, in that northern clime
Which holds his dust—its dearest treasure now.
The morn that dawned upon the Poet's birth,
Blew matins shrill to the pale germs of spring,
That winter's icy hand yet bound to earth;
The freed streams ran in music murmuring;
While warbled notes gushed clear o'er bank and brae,
And woods responsive rang, to hail his natal day!

Fast flew the halcyon hours of childhood's dream,
Amid the brooks, and flowers, and shady trees,
When fairy forms danced 'neath the moon's soft beam,
And silvery voices whispered in the breeze.
Then forth he went—the simple peasant boy,
To hallow labour with the minstrel's lay;
E'en from the floweret wild to gather joy;
To gild the lowly lot with magic ray;
And o'er each muirland plain and craggy height
To shed a gladdening halo of unfading light.

He guides the plough where mountain daisies grow
By broomy hillside, stout of heart and limb,
While from on high aërial anthems flow
As the blythe lark trills out its morning hymn.
The landscape breathes beneath his lustrous glance;
The corn-fields wave with more majestic grace;
More beauteous shades the leafy groves enhance;
More gorgeous dyes the sun's bright fingers trace;

Whilst Nature from her sky-encircled throne Bends sweetly to the bard and claims him as her own.

His ear drinks in each sound of wakened life,
And, pictured in his eye, each glade and glen
And far-extending dale, with beauty rife,
In quick succession greets his raptured ken.
Rejoicingly he hears from earth to sky
A thousand mingling harmonies ascend;
The mavis' song—the linnet's lay—the cry
Of wild fowl, as in love their voices blend.
Musing he stands in ecstacy of thought,
While teeming fancies rise, spontaneous and unsought.

Anon he wanders by the wimpling stream;

Not all alone he gazes on the scene;

Love lights the vale with warm and tender beam,

And clothes the mountain with a brighter green—

A fair young form moves softly by his side,

In free unconscious loveliness and grace;

Her eyes are raised to his in modest pride,

And smiles and blushes meet upon her face,

As in that soothing, silent, twilight hour,

He tells her all his bliss, and all her witching power.

As from the rock the crystal waters leap,

Like radiant gems poured from an emerald urn;

As infancy wakes from its rosy sleep,

A mother's fond caresses to return;

So moves his soul in deepest sympathy,
While passion swells to music in his heart,
And melting words flow forth in melody,
That kindling thoughts and burning sighs impart;
For love's inspiring flame has fired his breast,
And in the peasant's garb the poet stands confessed!

With vivid colours, on his varied page,

He paints the honest cottar's humble home:

The simple household list to pious age,

And all their idle thoughts forget to roam.

The joys, the hopes, the fears, the guileless mirth,

The strong enduring faith, the patient toil,

The peace, that gather round the rural hearth,

Unruffled by the busy world's turmoil;

These—these he mirrors to a nation's eyes,

And lowly worth and truth, the greatest learn to prize!

The glorious annals of his native land
Rouse in his large heart all a patriot's zeal;
In Freedom's cause he nerves his willing hand,
And breathes his fondest prayers for Scotia's weal.
Whate'er the past reveals of good or great,
Each high emprize, each bold heroic deed—
The tyrant's fall—the martyr's fiery fate,
His reverence win, and, scorning sect or creed,
His genius proudly soars free, unconfined—
His home the world—his fellow-citizens Mankind!

Bright o'er his path the rainbow's tints appear,
And hope shines forth from its expanding form:
'Tis but to veil the dark clouds lowering near,
And 'whelm him mid the conflict of the storm;
Before his eyes deceitful phantoms gleam
To lure and lead him from the trodden way;
Like mocking stars that glitter on the stream,
And sink, and melt with morning's rival ray—
Darkness falls down, and through the gloom of night,
In glory's dawning hour, his spirit wings its flight.

Mourn him no more! The sad dream is dissolved:

His visioned hope is now reality—

A hundred years have in their course revolved

But to sublime his song to prophecy;

And as time speeds with strong untiring wing,

And ever as this honoured day returns,

Shall distant ages added tributes bring,

And blended nations hail the name of Burns;

While votive throngs unite with one acclaim

To deck his sculptured form with wreaths of deathless fame!



TLIX

fran Bean Scotia.

74 L L 1 E

The heather springs not for the exile's hand,
Ayr's lovely wave flows never past his feet:
Yet true to-day, upon the adopted strand.
The fervent Spottish heart shall homeward heat:
With reverent gladness fittly does it greet
And cherish this his grand memorial hour.
Whose rapturous song rose lark-like, ringing sweet
O'er the charmed land that nursed the magic power.
And fondly guards his fame, her still unrivalled dower.

By "Bonnie Doon" a century since, begun
His brief vicissitude of glorious pain;
Familiar now, where foreign rivers run.
On wild north shore, or flowery tropic plain.

And while the Scottish maiden's rural tongue
Recalls the tender passion of his lay:
While shepherds bask the golden broom among.
Their fair flock tending, the long summer day;
While "Nith" and lonely "Lugar" roll away.
His music mingling with each Sylvan tone;
While beauty loves his homage to repay,
And his wrong'd aspirations freemen own:
Shall he, on Scottish soil, all other bards dethrone.

If seldom in the straight and narrow road,

The world's beloved prodigal was found;

Alone he lifted his repentant load;

Uncheered, he traversed thorny, barren ground;

Thick fell the shafts on armour never sound,

While that bleak journey neared its friendly close.

Ye! whom the perfect archer cannot wound,

Still point your arrows! We, against his foes,

Will Love's invulnerable shield oppose.

Defenceless now no more—that lofty name,
Both radiant star and beacon light shall be;
Secure and high, it sheds a warning flame
Down the dark billows of life's wreck-strewn sea.
Warm youth and hoary age alike find free
Fair warrant for the love his memory earns;
When, bearing boughs from you immortal tree,
Brave, wise, religious Scotland proudly turns
To seek, with pilgrim love, the grave of ROBERT BURNS.

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"For he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And, of the past, are all that cannot pass away."—Shelley.

TIME rolls apace, and draws its sombre curtain
O'er generations passing from our view;
We find old friendships fading, sad, uncertain—
Old hopes, old feelings, changing into new.

A hundred years! and Time's destroying finger
Has left but little of the wreck behind,
Save radiant stars that through the darkness linger—
Bright emanations of immortal mind.

Men who have shone as lamps to light all ages,
Time hovers vainly round their funeral urns;
Thus, blazoned amid heroes, bards and sages,
We hail, with joy and pride, the name of BURNS.

And now all lands shall honour, with rejoicing,
The Peasant Bard, who earned immortal fame;
For hark! the people gather, grandly voicing
The anthem of a nation's loud acclaim.

To Him, the lofty bard—the peasant lowly— The son of sorrow—and the lord of song! To Him dominion high—remembrance holy, Triumph, and love, and gratitude belong!

He lived and sang unhonoured, unrewarded,
Through anxious days of poverty and woe;
Yet Fortune's frowns and favours disregarded,
And bade, 'mid grief, his sweetest numbers flow.

To him the poet's joys and tears were given;
The dove-like spirit, beautiful and bright,
Descended on him as a gift from Heaven,
And filled his soul with tenderness and might.

With tenderness—to feel for every sorrow

That haunts the paths of poverty and care;

To streak with gleams of hope the weary morrow,

And light with joy the darkness of despair.

To be a brother to all gentle spirits

Who walk the world in charity and love;

To spare the lowliest creature that inherits

Its simple happy life from God above.



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CENTENARY POEMS.

With might—to scourge the tyrant and aggressor.

To teach mankind a manly scorn of wrong;

To be the victim's shield—the slave's redresser—

To guard the lowly from the lordly strong.

To rail at cant—to scoff at superstition—
To crush with iron heel deceit and pride;
To honour truth—and aid the lofty mission
Of pure religion through the whole world wide.

His strong and manly soul, and genius splendid,
Made him, by right, a priest at Nature's shrine;
Though stormy passions with the glory blended,
And dimmed with human frailty gifts divine;

Yet left him still a Teacher and a Poet,

To look on Nature with a loving eye,

To see in all things beauty, and to show it

To all mankind in strains that cannot die.

To be a haunter of each lonely fountain—
To learn its music from the babbling stream—
To feel the grandeur of the silent mountain—
In quiet woodland shades to muse and dream.

These calmed his heart and filled his soul with beauty,
And consecrated many a cheerless day;
Exalted labour—softened rugged duty—
And clothed with tender grace his rustic lay.

Nature baptised him from her crystal chalice,
And filled his heart with all things fair and sweet—
With manly love of love, and hate of malice—
And truth of soul, and scorn of all deceit.

He read men's motives by the light within him,
Unmasked the hypocrite, and spurned the mean;
While charity and love could ever win him,
The fall'n to shelter, and the weak to screen.

He told the world of high and manly bearing—
How truth and virtue bring their sure reward—
How lowly worth may rise to noble daring,
As Heaven's champion, or as Freedom's guard.

He sang the Hero's deed, the Patriot's story—
Of "Wallace wight," and Bruce the brave and free;
He gave his burning song to light their glory—
Now shrined in Scotland's heart are all the Three.

And many songs he sang, but most the olden,
Poets have dreamed, and sung, and loved it long;
He decked with verdure fresh, and blossoms golden,
This old, old, ever-sweet, love-laden song.

Breathing fond lays of love and faith unfailing,
The youth's desire, the pensive maiden's dream—
Soft hopes and fears and gentle thoughts exhaling,
To give new beauty to the olden theme.



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CENTENARY POEMS.

But the days darkened o'er the heart-worn singer,
And sorrows gathered as the night drew near;
While to the grave, of peace and rest the bringer,
The fearless soul looked forward calm and clear.

His heart was gladdened by its inward lustre,
When outward hopes and joys were far and few;.
He felt that Time, the Judge and the Adjuster,
Would to his memory pay the tribute due.

The dawning century beamed bright before him,

His eye, prophetic, wandered down the slope,

And saw young Freedom's glorious sunlight o'er him,

And all the coming reign of Truth and Hope.

Saw genial Peace lead forward heaven-born Science, And golden Plenty follow in their train; While Truth and Justice won the poors' reliance, And meek-eyed Mercy wept no more in vain.

Borne onward on the Spirit's rapid pinion,

Down the dim vistas of the future years;

He saw afar a crown and a dominion,

Beyond the reach of present griefs and tears.

A crown—of fame undying and eternal—
Dominion—o'er the hearts of men unborn;
For song, alone for ever green and vernal,
Wears through all time the freshness of the morn.

Song lives for aye! because, with soul immortal
And godlike mind, the Poet walks the earth,
And draws down lightning sparks from heaven's portal
To blend with thoughts and dreams of lowlier birth;

All, passing through his mind with rainbow splendour,
Become interpreters of truths sublime;
Urge noble aims, make rude hearts pure and tender,
Instruct the world, and charm all coming time.

Burns died, and now the turf grows o'er him greenly—
A peaceful glory rests upon his grave;
While memory mingles feelings cherished keenly,
For ills he suffered, and for good he gave.

But past is all the sorrow and the scorning:

The evil dies, the good lives on for aye;

Night's murky clouds shine golden in the morning;

The Man's afflictions gave the Poet's lay.

So men shall glory in his songs for ever,

And maidens sing them by the cottage hearth,
While tender pity, truth, and high endeavour,

And love and duty hold their place on earth.

Then praise to him, the Poet of all ages,

The martyr of misfortune in his own;

Immortal fame all mortal grief assuages,

And lights the deathless Bard to glory's throne.



264

CENTENARY POEMS.

We chant no requiem for the great departed—
No dirge for him who wins the Poet's crown;
But joy that He, the noble and true-hearted,
Has reached the fulness of his high renown.

That He, who human joys and sorrows painted,
And in stern life's contention bore his part,
Now dwells sublime among the throned and sainted,
And lives for ever in the People's heart.



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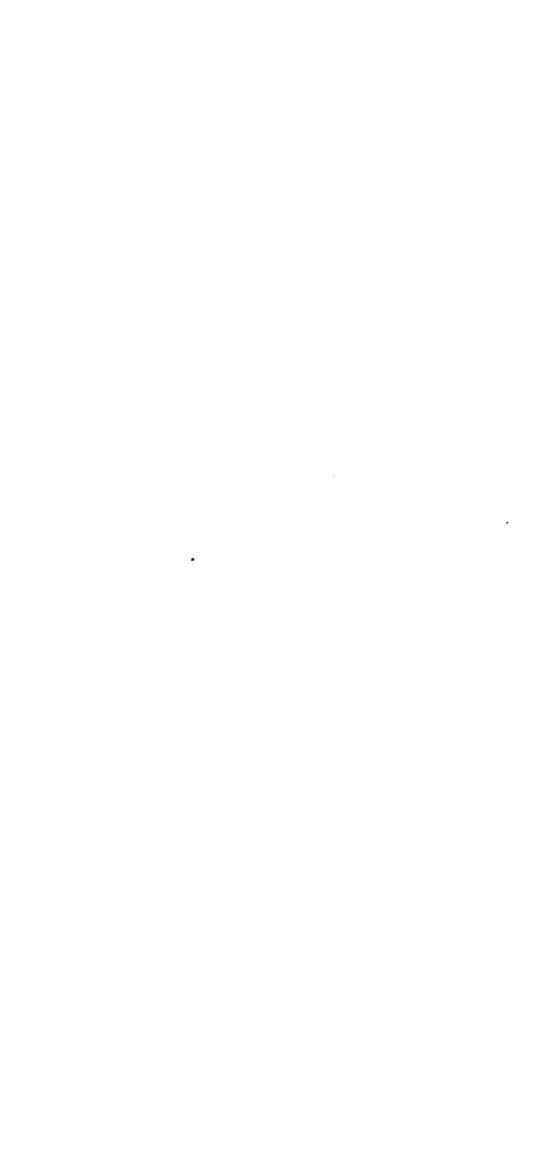
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